**University of Alberta**

# First-year University Students' Approach to their Current Developmental Period

by

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## ABSTRACT

The transition to adulthood is a topic of interest in both psychological and sociological disciplines. Two scholars, Dr. Jeffrey Arnett and Dr. James Côté, developed theories to describe this important period of the lifespan. The current study sought to evaluate the two theories by focusing on the approach taken by individuals undergoing the transition to adulthood. Participants were 169 full-time first-year students who took part in the longitudinal *Making the Transition* study, started in the fall of 2004 (*M* age = 18.4, *SD* = .48, 60% female). Cluster analysis identified three groups of individuals with different approaches to the transition to adulthood ranging from passive to active identity seekers. Results are interpreted in the context of Arnett's and Côté's theories. The current study helps to advance understanding of the transition to adulthood through an empirical examination of individuals' subjective views of the period and their relationship with diverse psychosocial outcomes.

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# Chapter I

## Introduction

### *The Psychosocial Moratorium*

Arguably one of the most influential developmental theorists is Erik Erikson. Working in the psychoanalytic tradition, he proposed a series of eight epigenetic stages through which individuals pass during the life cycle. Each stage is defined by a tension between two opposing forces, and a resolution of this tension strengthens individuals and prepares them to deal successfully with the following stages (Erikson & Erikson, 1997). The details of each stage have been laid out sufficiently in other literature (e.g., Erikson, 1982; Erikson & Erikson, 1997), and thus will not be presented here, as our focus is solely on the transition to adulthood. According to Erikson, the crisis inherent to adolescence is between the adaptive force of identity versus the maladaptive force of identity confusion. From an adequate settlement of this conflict emergés the psychosocial strength of fidelity, a capacity necessary to undertake the crises of intimacy, generativity, and integrity that follow.

As Erikson suggests, "only a firm sense of inner identity marks the end of the adolescent process and is a condition for further and truly individual maturation" (Erikson, 1968, p. 89). He acknowledges that this process may not be completed in the years allotted by society to the period of "adolescence" but may continue into "the ever more protracted apprenticeship of the later school and college years" (Erikson & Erikson, 1997, p. 75). In this vein he describes a latency period that exists in some cultures at the end of adolescence, which allows the individual extra time to develop and successfully resolve the identity crisis. In his words, "this period can be viewed as a psychosocial

moratorium during which the young adult through free role experimentation may find a niche in some section of his society, a niche which is firmly defined and yet seems to be uniquely made for him" (Erikson, 1968, p. 156). Demographic changes and the availability and freedom to adopt different roles have led researchers to argue that the modern transition to adulthood represents such a moratorium.

*Demographic Shifts in Young Adulthood*

The passage from adolescence to adulthood in western culture today is very different than it has been in the past, and still is in other places. Some sociologists and psychologists even argue that this transition is substantially different from what it was even a half century ago (Buchmann, 1989; Mortimer, Zimmer-Gembeck, Holmes, & Shanahan, 2002; Research Network on Transitions to Adulthood, 2003; Shanahan, 2000). During the past 50 years, there were a number of dramatic shifts in the demographic trends among those aged 18-24. First, young people are staying at home with their parents longer, and are more likely to return home once they have left (Arnett, 2000b). According to the Canadian Census conducted in 2001, 41% of those aged 20-29 lived at home with their parents, up from 27% in 1981. Furthermore, 33% of males and 28% of females moved back to their parents' home after having left (Statistics Canada, 2002a).

There have been shifts also in education and career adoption, with more individuals attending some form of postsecondary school and delaying entrance into full-time employment. In 1981, 48% of young people aged 15-24 were employed full-time, and 21% were employed part-time. By 2005, only 31% of all 15-24 year olds were employed full-time, and 25% were employed part-time (Statistics Canada, 1996a, 1996b, 2005a, 2005b). When providing reasons for part-time vs. full-time employment, 72.6%

of 15-24 year olds cited school attendance as the explanation (Statistics Canada, 2005c). According to the 1986 census, approximately 32% of the population had achieved some form of educational degree or diploma following high school. By 2001, this number had risen to 44% (Statistics Canada, 2001). According to Krahn (1996), because of the growing necessity of a higher-level education and labor market structures that make finding a good job and starting a career difficult, the transition from school to work for young people is becoming increasingly challenging (Krahn, 1996).

Finally, the rate of common-law unions among 20-29 year old Canadians increased from 8 to 17% from 1981 to 2001, although not enough to counter the overall decline in marriage. The proportion of men aged 20-24 living in some form of a union (either common-law or marriage) decreased from 27 to 14%, while the rate for females dropped from 46 to 26% (Statistics Canada, 2002b). Many young women are also delaying having children. According to a publication produced by Statistics Canada, "the average age of women giving birth in Canada in 2003 was 29.6 years, continuing a long-established trend. Two decades ago, the average age was 26.9 years" (2005d, p. 2). The total fertility rate among Canadian women has dropped from 3.5 children in 1921 to 1.5 in 1999. Furthermore, due to a variety of reasons including greater education requirements, greater involvement in the labor force, and later age at marriage, an approximate 7% of women state they plan to remain childless indefinitely (Stobert & Kemeny, 2003).

Despite these trends, there remains a great deal of variability in the transition to adulthood among young people (Rindfuss, 1991, Shanahan, 2000). During adolescence, the vast majority of individuals are living with parents, attending school, and neither

married nor parents themselves. However, by the age of 30 most people are no longer in school, they are married, and live independently (Arnett, 2000a). In contrast, between the ages of 18 and 29 a great deal of diversity exists, with the trajectories of the developmental transition from adolescence to adulthood varying by SES, race, and gender, among other factors (Cohen, Kasen, Chen, Hartmark, & Gordon, 2003). Although there is no dispute that demographic changes have occurred, some theorists take differing views on the meaning of such changes, both for individual development and for society as a whole.

*Contemporary Theories of the Transition to Adulthood*

The subject of the transition to adulthood is a topic currently being discussed and debated within both the disciplines of psychology and sociology, although from somewhat different perspectives. In his article, *Integrating the Life Course and Life-Span: Formulating Research Questions with Dual Points of Entry,* Shanahan and Porfeli (2002) describe the differences this way:

> Life-span research [psychological] typically attempts to describe and explain person-level, psychological variables that reference, for example, cognition, emotion, and motivation. In contrast, life course [sociological] research typically focuses on the interplay between situation and biography: how the particularities of one's social location give rise to modes of adaptation (....) Life-span psychologists typically begin with psychological functions and ask questions about change and stability, individual differences, and intraindividual plasticity. Life course sociologists typically begin with social change and ask how it

influences communities, families, and, in turn, trajectories of development. (p. 399)

Furthermore, dialogue between the two disciplines is limited, leading Shanahan and Porfeli (2002) to call for "greater communication" between life-span and life course researchers in order to take "a critical step toward encouraging research that acknowledges person-context interactions" (p. 405).

Two North American theorists who have taken a step toward greater inter-disciplinary conversation are psychologist Dr. Jeffrey Arnett, and sociologist Dr. James Côté. Both researchers agree that the demographic changes discussed above reflect an Eriksonian "psychosocial moratorium," but they disagree on the impact of this moratorium for youth, and therefore, the future of society. The two theorists recently argued their opinions at the 2nd Conference on Emerging Adulthood in a debate entitled, "Emerging Adulthood: A Time of Thriving or Floundering? For Whom and Why?" (Miami, Florida, Feb. 18-19, 2005). They have also recently published an article together (Schwartz, Côté, & Arnett, 2005) in an attempt to analyze the period together from what Shanahan and Porfeli (2002) might term "dual points of entry". It is the prominence of both these theorists in the current debate about the transition to adulthood that accounts for the focus on their work in the present study.

*The Psychological Approach: Arnett and the Theory of "Emerging Adulthood"*

According to Arnett, the demographic changes that have taken place have provided individuals with an increased opportunity to explore their identities and experiment with possible future roles during their transition to adulthood. He proposes that the stretch of life from approximately age 18 to the mid-to-late twenties has become

a distinct developmental period (Arnett, 2000a, 2000b; Arnett & Taber, 1994). He recommends that this period be termed "emerging adulthood" to reflect the demographic and psychological changes taking place while setting it apart from conceptualizations of adolescence and adulthood. According to his theory, individuals in this age-span are unique not only demographically, but also subjectively. With the decline in unambiguous social markers such as marriage, psychological factors such as maturity are becoming more representative of adult status, though demographic transitions continue to play an important role (Research Network on Transitions to Adulthood, 2003).

Arnett suggests that "the more individualistic a culture becomes, the more the transition to adulthood is individually rather than socially defined. It takes place subjectively, individually, internally, in an individual's *sense* of having reached a state of cognitive self-sufficiency, emotional self-reliance, and behavioral self-control" (Arnett & Taber, 1994, p. 533). In a study of individuals ranging from 13 to 55, accepting responsibility for one's actions, deciding on beliefs and values independent from others, and establishing an equal relationship with parents were ranked highest in a list of possible markers of adulthood. The majority of adolescents did not consider themselves adults, and the majority of those in their thirties did. However, at least half of those in their twenties reported a sense of being interposed, or adult in some ways but not others (Arnett, 2001). Arnett suggests that emerging adulthood is primarily a period of exploration. Especially in the areas of romantic relationships, work, and ideology, "emerging adulthood is a time of life when many different directions remain possible, when little about the future has been decided for certain, when the scope of independent

exploration of life's possibilities is greater for most people than it will be at any other period of the life course" (Arnett, 2000a, p. 469).

Although the circumstances are not the same in all socioeconomic and cultural groups, Arnett argues that the shifts that have occurred in marriage, education, and employment for the majority of the middle class in developed countries provide individuals with the chance to invest time in figuring out who they truly are and what is important to them, what kind of a career would be most fulfilling, and who they want to spend their lives with, if anyone at all. According to Arnett:

> The overall result of these changes is that it is no longer normative for the late teens and early twenties to be a period of intensive preparation for imminent entry into adult roles. On the contrary, the new norm is that these are years of experimentation and exploration of a variety of life possibilities, as enduring decisions are delayed for many young people into the mid-to-late twenties. (Arnett, Ramos, & Jensen, 2001, p. 69)

Arnett lays out five primary features of the subjective experience of emerging adulthood: identity exploration, a sense of possibility, instability, self-focus, and feeling in-between (Arnett, 2000a, 2000b). He states that the majority of emerging adults consider the present period of their lives to be mainly a time of *identity exploration* and experimentation or *possibility*. According to Arnett, "the focus on identity issues in emerging adulthood can be seen in the three main areas of identity exploration: Love, work, and worldviews. Identity formation involves trying out various life possibilities and gradually moving toward making enduring decisions" (Arnett, 2000a, p. 473). This ability to "try out" or "experiment" presents to emerging adults the "possibility of

change". He continues, "For this limited window of time- 7, perhaps 10, years- the fulfillment of all their hopes seems possible, because for most people the range of their choices for how to live is greater than it had ever been before and greater than it will ever be again" (Arnett, 2000b, p. 17).

As well however, Arnett acknowledges that the number of decisions that need to be made and the multitude of choices available can be overwhelming and stressful at times, and the inconsistency in work, relationships, and residency unsettling. Thus individuals may also consider this time in their lives to be somewhat negative due to its *instability*. This instability is reflected in the number of young people who change residences, and is indicative of the different types of lifestyles individuals explore. Emerging adulthood is also considered to be the most *self-focused* period of the life-span, due to the lack of responsibilities to family and the intense self-exploration that is taking place (Arnett, 2000b). Arnett does not use the term "self-focus" in a derisive way, rather "by focusing on themselves, emerging adults develop skills for daily living, gain a better understanding of who they are and what they want from life, and begin to build a foundation for their adult lives" (Arnett, 2000b, p. 13).

Finally, emerging adulthood is an age of *feeling in-between*. No longer teenagers living at home with their parents, but yet to enter a stable career and create a family of their own, emerging adults define themselves neither as adolescents, nor adults. "It is only in their later thirties, their forties, and their fifties that this sense of ambiguity has faded for nearly everyone and the feeling of being adult is well established" (Arnett, 2000b, p. 14). Overall though, Arnett considers this period a predominantly beneficial time when individuals can experiment with different options before making more

enduring choices, and can take advantage of the freedom available to them at this point in their lives. "For both love and work, the goals of identity explorations in emerging adulthood are not limited to direct preparation for adult roles. On the contrary, the explorations of emerging adulthood are in part explorations for their own sake, part of obtaining a broad range of life experiences before taking on enduring- and limiting- adult responsibilities" (Arnett, 2000a, p. 474). Though it may lead to struggle and feelings of being overwhelmed at times, overall emerging adulthood is depicted as a positive development in western society (Arnett, 2000b).

*The Sociological Approach: Côté's Arrested Adulthood and Theory of Identity Capital*

In contrast, according to Dr. James Côté, the demographic changes occurring among young people today are representative of the destructuralization of western societies, in which the traditional forms of societal institutions such as marriage and education no longer guide individual choice. This is sometimes referred to in sociological literature as the "de-coupling" of the life course, for example, marriage is no longer tied to parenthood and education is no longer tied to work (Côté, 2000). In this situation, more options exist when making life decisions, but there is also less counsel and support from the community. The result is a society that is increasingly individualized, with a growing number of young people relying on their own resources and faculties when navigating their path to adulthood. Côté is not alone in his field in proposing a society that is increasingly individualized. As Bauman (2001) explains:

> What the idea of 'individualization' carries is the emancipation of the individual from the ascribed, inherited and inborn determination of his or her social character: a departure rightly seen as a most conspicuous and seminal feature of

> the modern condition. To put it in a nutshell, "individualization' consists in transforming human 'identity' from a 'given' into a 'task'- and charging the actors with the responsibility for performing that task and for the consequences (also the side-effects) of their performance; in other words, it consists in establishing a 'de jure' autonomy (though not necessarily a *de facto* one). (p. 144)

The outcomes of these changes have the potential to be both positive and negative. As Côté (2000) writes, "This development has freed people to try to fully develop themselves and their potentials, and many people attempt to do so. However, there is evidence that a large number-*perhaps the majority* [italics added]- are not taking advantage of the loosening of traditional constraints but instead passively allow themselves to be manipulated by the profit-based, "mass" structures that have arisen in place of traditional cultural institutions" (p. 5). Structures such as the media and capitalism encourage individuals to fit in and define themselves through the consumption of goods and services, rather than through self-exploration and discovery. This leads to an "image-oriented" personality that is dependent on the approval of others and is easily influenced by shifting social trends (Côté, 1996).

Furthermore, Côté contends that since industrialization, young people have been increasingly displaced from the labor market, relegated to the position of semi-autonomous consumers without real intellectual input or capital in the economy during their youth. According to Betcherman (1997) of the Canadian Policy Research Networks, more youth are being forced by labor market conditions into part-time employment and jobs that provide lower wages and security. Post-secondary education can improve one's chances, although "economic restructuring, downsizing, and the

increase in non-standard employment have made school-work transitions more difficult for all youth" (Krahn, 1996, p. 3).

Research has also documented a decrease in traditional political involvement among young adults. Author Sheilah Mann (1999) states that:

> The current youngest American cohort displays greater political apathy and cynicism, lower attention to political information, lower voting turnout (S. Bennett 1997; S. Bennett and Rademacher 1997; Rahn 1998), less inclination to identify with political parties (Dennis and Owen 1997), lower levels of patriotism (Owen 1997) and of pride in how democracy works in the U.S., and less pride in being a citizen (Rahn 1998) than any other cohort ever studied. A generational analysis of the data on political participation collected for Voice and Equality (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995) confirms that Americans in their late teens and twenties are less engaged in public life and the civil society than are elder Americans (Schlozman et al. 1998). (pp. 265-266)

Other researchers have painted a similar picture of youth political engagement in Canada (Adsett & McKellar, 2002; Maghami, 1974).

According to Côté, "In order [for youth] to see themselves as meaningful and active agents in the world, young people must be able to project themselves into a future where they assume adult roles" (Côté & Allahar, 1996, p. 82). Segregation from the political, social, and economic world of adults makes it more difficult for youth to conceptualize themselves as adults in realistic roles, and limits their opportunities to develop the skills and networks necessary for future success (referred to by Côté as "identity capital"). Not being able to visualize themselves in viable adult roles, many

youth experience identity confusion, and "the longer they experience this confusion, the more difficult it becomes to develop the ego strength necessary to enact adult roles. Thus they find themselves caught in a vicious circle that may ultimately incapacitate them or lead them to high levels of risk-taking and gratuitous violence" (Côté & Allahar, 1996, pp. 82-83). This concern has also been expressed by Furlong and Cartmel (1997) who suggest that "being denied access to the financial rewards of working life and forced into greater dependency on their families, young people may become involved in crime as a way to gain access to consumer culture or simply as part of the quest for excitement or kicks that has long been central to the lives of young people" (p. 83).

Even for those youth who avoid the more dramatic pitfalls of the changes in young adulthood, their relegation to dependent status and the restrictions placed on their involvement in adult society has left many youth vulnerable to the temptation to search for identity in pop culture and susceptible to manipulation by others. According to Pablo del Rio (1996), "social life is becoming increasingly mediated by mass-communication messages, and is less bounded by cultural processes of frequent and varied immediate personal interactions. In other words, cultural communication is being reorganized around mass-communication media" (p. 160). According to Zukin and Maguire (2004), "an increasing part of public culture is shaped by goods and services, advertisements that promote their use, and places- from shopping malls and websites to fitness centers and museum gift shops- where they are displayed, viewed, and bought" (p. 173). "Issues of identity and consumption converge in the concepts of "taste" and "lifestyle," that is, systems of practices through which individuals classify themselves by their classification of consumer goods as more or less desirable, acceptable, or valuable" (Zukin & Maguire,

2004, p. 181). Miles (1996) states that "young people's experience as consumers and the investment placed in consumption, by young people, as a cultural expression of 'belonging' in contemporary society play a significant role in structuring individual identities" (p. 140). It is this widespread sociological theory of mass culture that leads to Côté's (2000) opinion that:

> To the extent that the adult community segregated and isolated young people, depriving them of institutional supports and ritualized passages into adulthood, the industries of mass culture have moved in, selling young people common sources of ersatz identity and ritual. The pop culture that passes as youth culture now serves to exploit the young and maintain their separation from adult society, membership in which would give them a stable, validated adult identity and, likely, the best chance of resuming their progression through the psychosocial stages of the life cycle. (p. 125)

Fortunately, youth can still exercise some discretion when making choices about their identities and how active they wish to be in the process of their own development. Faced with the need to make decisions about their lives and who they are (i.e., their identities), Côté suggests two possible avenues that exist at either end of a continuum. On one side is what he terms "developmental" individualism, which is an active deliberation of options and alternatives, and on the other is "default" individualism, which requires little agency and depends heavily on impression management and the guidance of popular culture (Côté, 1996, 2000; Côté & Schwartz, 2002). Youth who take the path of default individualism, or the path of least resistance, abdicate their power to explore and develop their own identities and allow themselves to be molded by the

images of identity they see presented in society (what he calls "image consumption"). Simply adopting a role suggested by consumerist society leads to an approach to life based on a narcissistic need to consume in order to present a particular image to others and maintain a sense of identity and belonging (Côté, 2002). "In short, a case can be made that an increasing number of people are arriving at the antithesis of "traditional adulthood" as their "needs and wants" expand and their "obligations and attachments" contract. Underlying this situation is a decline in the number of people with a stable sense of inner identity and an increase in the number who are confused, angry, and selfish half-adults" (Côté, 2000, p. 198)

Alternatively, individuals who adopt a path characterized by developmental individualism take more initiative in their cognitive, emotional, and psychological growth by restraining their impulses and investing in activities that will produce greater dividends in the long run. "Developmental individualism includes cognitive growth, identity formation, and emotional maturity, as well as finding and developing one's special skills, spiritual awareness, and so forth" (Côté, 2000, p. 37). In his identity capital model, resources associated with later success are both tangible (e.g., community ties, financial resources) and intangible (e.g., intellect, self-esteem) (Côté, 1997, 2002). Individuals who embrace developmental individualism during their transition to adulthood seek to increase their identity capital by "consolidating advanced forms of personal development, making progress in one's life project, resolving adult-identity issues, securing community memberships that provide identity validation and social capital, and attaining an occupation that is personally and financially gratifying" (Côté, 2002, p. 120).

Although Côté suggests that some proportion of the population may already be choosing a more developmental path, he contends that default individualization is pervasive in modern society and that few people are taking full advantage of the opportunities available to better enrich themselves (Côté, 2000). "The bulk of the population, including adults, seems to prefer the paths of least resistance and effort, perhaps because the educational structures channel most people this way… In any event, default individualization paths do not lead to higher orders of functioning but to lower ones, or to stagnation" (p. 41). In other words, the most prevalent individualism occurring during the transition to adulthood is default. Even more disconcerting, Côté suggests that rather than emerging adulthood being a distinct period prior to the assumption of adult roles as Arnett suggests, the destructuralization of society along with the economic disenfranchisement of youth and the propensity for default individualization may lead to the decline of adulthood itself. As he predicts, "its [youthoods] moratorium characteristics will become more entrenched and prolonged with each successive cohort…Hence, we may see the end of adulthood as we know it, at least for much of the population, especially regarding qualities like independence, responsibility, and commitment" (Côté, 2000, p. 180).

*Theoretical Connections*

Given Côté and Arnett's seemingly different viewpoints, this study seeks to further knowledge of the period by examining the start of the transition to adulthood while combining the two perspectives. In brief, Côté's conceptualization of youth who adopt a developmental approach to individualization will be viewed as analogous to Arnett's description of most emerging adults. According to Arnett, the demographic

changes that have taken place for youth in particular cultures (often those who are also financially well-off) have led to a situation in which "identity becomes based less on prescribed social roles and more on individual choices, on decisions that each person makes about what values to embrace and what paths to pursue in love and work" (Arnett, 2002, p. 781). Similar to Côté's description of default individualism, Arnett states that "Some people react to this responsibility with identity confusion or seek refuge in a self-selected culture that offers more structure and takes over some decisions" (Arnett, 2002, p. 781). However, he also says that "nevertheless, most people embrace the opportunity to make such decisions for themselves" (Arnett, 2002, p. 781). In other words, if Arnett's representation of the period is accurate, the majority of individuals are taking the developmental path to adulthood. In this study, by focusing on the ways that emerging adults view this time in their lives, we hope to draw a distinction between those who are actively involved in their own development (à la developmental individualism), and those who might be floundering unaware of their circumstances (i.e., default individualism).

Now, as Côté suggests, the default-developmental distinction likely exists as a continuum with variation in between, rather than a clear-cut dichotomy (Côté, 2000). He also states that the categories are not static, but that "people's life courses likely mix these two types of individualization, perhaps pursuing one trajectory in various aspects of their personal lives and the other in various aspects of the professional or work lives. Accordingly, individualization is not a dichotomous process, but it is of heuristic value to speak of the "pure forms" or "ideal types" of individualization while recognizing the complexities of the processes in real life" (p. 34). Nevertheless, even though a range of individuals likely exists, Côté's writing clearly suggests that a default approach is

commonly taken by the majority of individuals. In order to demonstrate the parallels between the two theoretical depictions in further detail, the five characteristics of emerging adulthood suggested by Arnett will be used.

Both Côté and Arnett agree that the transition to adulthood is a time of individual decision making, and is largely unregulated by societal precedents. Unlike Côté, Arnett does not really distinguish different paths in this developmental period. While he acknowledges that "cultural influences structure and sometimes limit the extent to which emerging adults are able to use their late teens and twenties this way, and not all young people in this age period are able to use these years for independent exploration" (Arnett, 2000a, p. 470), in the majority of his work, Arnett presents "emerging adults" as a coherent group of individuals, focusing only on the positive aspects of the period. In his paper on globalization, he states "where a period of emerging adulthood is present, young people have a longer period for identity explorations in love and work before they commit themselves to long-term choices. By experiencing different love relationships, different educational possibilities, and different jobs, they learn more about themselves and they clarify their preferences and abilities" (Arnett, 2002, p. 781).

Implied by this description of emerging adulthood is the assumption that individuals will choose to take advantage of the opportunities available to them. As he says elsewhere, "Having left the dependency of childhood and adolescence, and having not yet entered the enduring responsibilities that are normative in adulthood, emerging adults often explore a variety of possible life directions in love, work, and worldviews" (Arnett, 2000a, p.469). As described in more detail earlier, Arnett conceives of emerging adulthood as a time of identity exploration, experimentation and possibility, self-focus,

and of feeling in-between for the majority of individuals, thus forming a single group albeit with some internal variation. Arnett states "we as scholars can characterize emerging adulthood as a period when change and exploration are common, even as we recognize the heterogeneity of the period and investigate this heterogeneity as one of emerging adulthood's distinguishing characteristics" (Arnett, 2000a, p. 479).

Alternatively, Côté clearly delineates different paths that may be taken when individuals are faced with the transition to adulthood: a developmental, active path, and a default stance in which others have more influence. Therefore, based on Côté's work and on the acknowledgement by Arnett that not every individual has the same opportunity to explore, at least two possible prototypes of individuals can be predicted to exist within the population (Figure 1).

The first group (Figure 1, panel A) would consist of those adopting a developmental individualization path. This group would likely consider themselves to be primarily in a time of active identity exploration, and would agree that there are many opportunities and possibilities in their futures. They are also likely to be grappling with complex issues and challenging themselves in different areas, and hence feeling they are in an uncertain and difficult time. Clearly this description resembles that given by Arnett of the typical emerging adult. A discrepancy could be argued, however, between Arnett's typical emerging adult and Côté's description of the individual undertaking developmental individualism, when it comes to the dimension of self-focus.

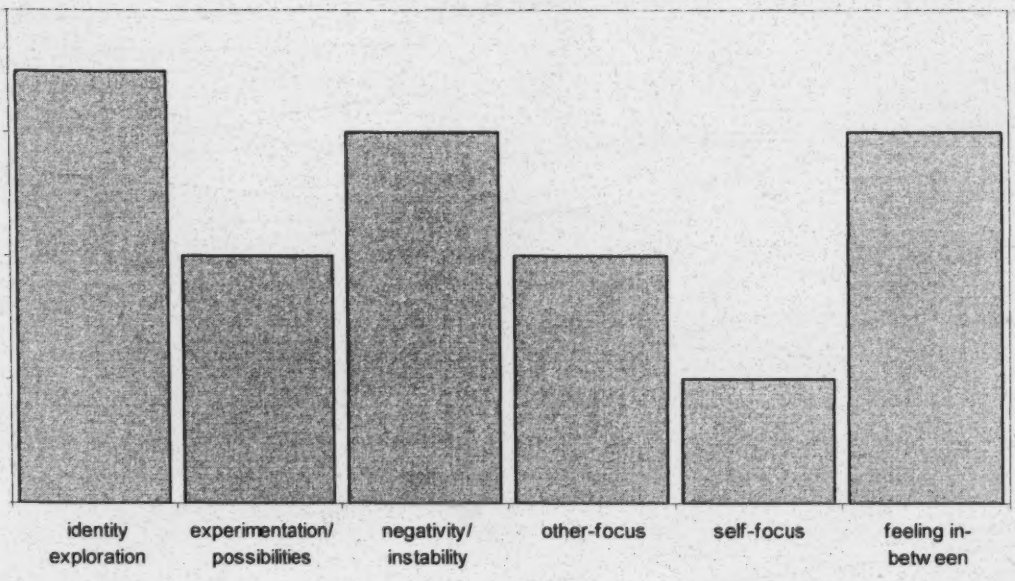
Following Côté, a key attribute of adulthood is a strong link to the rest of society. Therefore, we might expect that individuals who adopt a developmental approach would demonstrate a balance between focusing on themselves and their self-exploration, and

formulating ties with and commitments to the community. However, in Côté's own words, "When a moratorium effect is in play, we would predict that certain aspects of development would not be fostered in the short-run. In the long-run, though, those who take advantage of the moratorium may later experience even greater growth in those areas if their moratorium period was wisely spent, especially by laying the ground work for future development through experimenting with other forms of intellectual and emotional growth" (Côté, 1997, p. 591) Thus it is possible that individuals who adopt a developmental approach could be in a time of self-focus while exploring their identities, but through this process will become more equipped to engage successfully with the community in the future. Furthermore, Arnett's concept of self-focus does not exclude intimacy with others. On the contrary, this period is considered a time to explore relationships and bonds with others, just without the types of responsibilities inherent in parenthood and marriage (Arnett, 2000b).

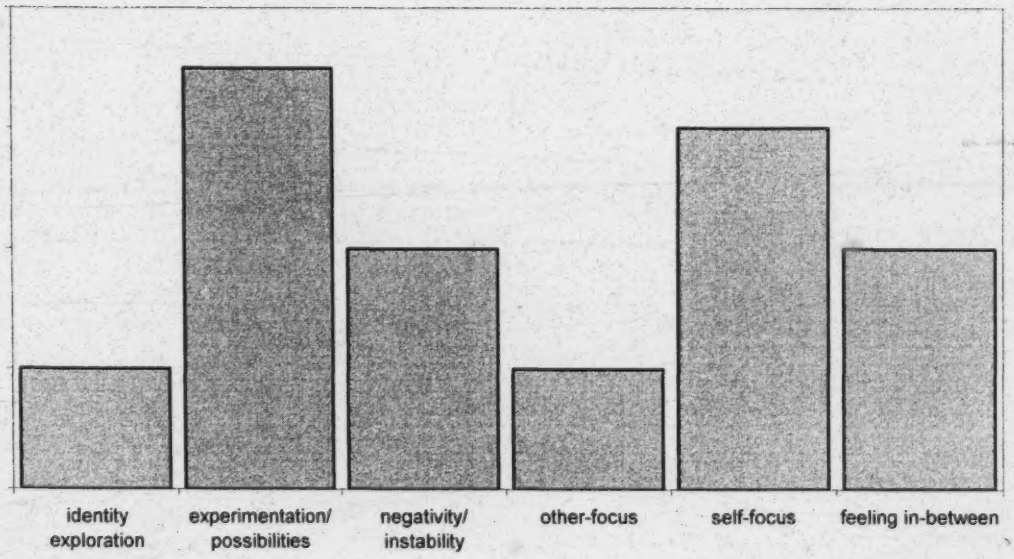
In their own research on the dimensions of emerging adulthood, Reifman, Arnett, and Colwell (2003) included a subscale measuring "other-focus" (e.g., responsibility for and commitment to others) to complement their self-focus subscale. Their findings were based on a comparison of five age groups, the youngest ages 18-23, and the oldest 50 years and above. Results showed that the youngest age group had the lowest mean on the other-focus subscale, which was positively correlated with age. This would seem to confirm Arnett's proposition that the self-focus of emerging adulthood is "normal, healthy, and *temporary* [italics added]" (Arnett, 2000b, p. 12), although it also raises the possibility that other-focus is a reflection of maturity, which would suggest perhaps those

Figure 1. *Predicted pattern of scores for developmental and default approaches to individualization based on subscales from the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA). The bars represent hypothetical mean scores on the subscales, which indicate to what extent participants see these qualities as characteristic of this time in their lives.*

**Developmental (A)**




**Default (B)**



taking a developmental approach to individualization may reflect higher levels than those who are not. Therefore, while we expect individuals in the developmental group to show a degree of self-focus, we expect to also see a higher level of other-focus than in the default group. Finally, individuals who are adopting a developmental approach are likely to feel "in-between", as they actively grapple with the balance of taking on adult responsibilities and focusing on their own development.

The second group (Figure 1, panel B) would encompass those who fall into the category of default individualization, to use Côté's terminology. Arnett seems to acknowledge the existence of this group, but does not devote much theoretical space to its examination. These individuals are more passive in their transition to adulthood, and are easily influenced by consumer culture that provides them with a ready-made identity and an easy way to obtain happiness through consumption. Our corporate society is continuously perpetuating a belief that the best is just around the corner or in the next store, thus it is reasonable that individuals in this group might consider themselves to be in a time of great possibilities. However, those in the default group are not as likely to see themselves in a time of identity exploration relative to individuals adopting a developmental approach.

Furthermore, aside from the negative events experienced by everyone on occasion, individuals in the default group are not undertaking as laborious a process of personal examination and are more inclined to assuage adverse situations through consumption, and thus are not as likely to see themselves in a negative or unstable period of their lives. As Côté says, "the easier paths are based on the "pleasure principle"- the basic drive to avoid pain and seek pleasure. In its late modern form, this can involve

undertaking a variety of unconventional and unplanned life courses, such as living from one moment to the next, balancing the avoidance of discomfort with the seeking of pleasure" (Côté, 2000, p. 42). Being in a constant state of impression management also requires a significant degree of self-monitoring, and as a result it would be expected that individuals in this group would consider themselves to be in a period of high self-focus. This self-focus may be more extreme than that of the developmental group as well, since the "image-oriented" person is prone to narcissism and "illusions are used as a basis for key interactions with others" (Côté, 2000, p. 130). We also expect that this group will not endorse the "other-focus" items to the same extent as those in the developmental group. We do expect that individuals in this group will also feel somewhat "in-between" adolescence and adulthood, though not to the same extent as those adopting a developmental approach. According to Côté, for individuals fully involved in default paths to individualism, "the line between youth and adulthood may be either irrelevant or invisible, so they may remain in a period of youthood throughout their lives, unless something jogs them out of it" (Côté, 2000, p. 200).

Another important similarity between the two theorists is that both view the transition to adulthood as reflected by the individual's subjective experience of the transition itself. As summarized by Shanahan, Porfeli, Mortimer, and Erikson (2005), according to Arnett:

> In the context of emerging adulthood, young people identify individualistic indicators of maturity (e.g., independent decision making) as the new markers of whether one is an adult and, according to this view, the demographic markers are deemed substantially less important by youth. Similarly, Côté (2000) suggests

> "youthhood" as a new phase of life during which "psychological adulthood" is hopefully attained through personal strivings. Côté likewise maintains that the importance of the traditional markers has declined significantly, largely replaced by emotional and cognitive maturity and an advanced sense of ethics. (p. 226)

These authors go on to suggest that "perhaps with increasing variability in the timing of transition markers, the criteria that define adulthood have become individualized, now resting primarily on subjective self-evaluations" (p. 226). This would suggest an important place for the study of subjective views on the transition to adulthood from emerging adults themselves. As Goossens (2001) states, "the sophisticated data-analytic studies on large, national data sets, which are so characteristic of sociological or demographic research on the transition to adulthood, should be complemented with social-psychological studies that analyze the meaning and interpretations that individuals assign to the transitions they are going through" (p. 27).

Schwartz, Côté, and Arnett (2005) took a step in this direction through studying the relationship between personal agency and individualization. Using measures of identity and agentic personality (self-esteem, purpose in life, internal locus of control, and ego strength), the authors successfully identified two clusters of individuals they termed developmental and default in a sample of undergraduate students at a large American university. From their results, they concluded that "what differentiates emerging adults following a default individualization pathway from those following a developmental individualization pathway, across ethnic groups, is commitment to a set of goals, values, and beliefs" (p. 223). However, the variables used in this study reflect what are generally considered stable characteristics, and thus do not necessarily help

identify what about emerging adulthood makes it an important time for identity development. As Shanahan and colleagues (2005) emphasize, "emerging adults" are defined by particular characteristics, such as exploration.

In this study, we seek to utilize those very characteristics highlighted by Arnett in his development of the concept of "emerging adulthood" in order to gain a better understanding of the way the subjective views of emerging adults about the period of life they are in reflect their approach to the period in terms of individualization. Furthermore, through this study we hope to add to the empirical evidence for what to this point have been heavily theoretical and descriptive arguments (see Shanahan et al., 2005).

*Theory-Based Cluster Predictions*

Drawing on the theories of Arnett and Côté, we hypothesize that at least two clusters of individuals can be identified in first-year university students as shown in Figure 1. Specifically, we predict that we will find two types of individuals with profiles or patterns of scales on the six variables similar to those seen in Figure 1. It is likely that other types may emerge, given Côté's argument that there is a range of individuals. To explore this hypothesis, we take a person approach to data analysis. In a person-centered approach, individuals become the unit of analysis and are grouped with others who have similar profiles across a range of variables. This approach takes into account the individual as a complex organism consisting of multiple attributes.

First-year university students are targeted because they are beginning their transition to adulthood and are likely to display variation in their approaches to this transition and in their identity development. For example, university students show a range of possible profiles. In their study of college students, Schwartz et al. concluded

that their results "support the dichotomizing of individualization into default and developmental pathways" (2005, p. 225). Furthermore, Côté has found evidence of agentic and non-agentic approaches to individualism in a similar cohort (Côté & Schwartz, 2002). As Côté (2006) states, "a maturity of identity is no longer guaranteed by educational achievements; rather, such achievements may now be devoid of secure agentic and existential underpinnings and merely reflect the bureaucratized opportunities created by others" (p. 5).

There is a large body of literature on individual differences in identity in college-aged students. Lange and Byrd (2002) documented variability in the identity development of first-year university students and a relationship between identity development and ability to cope with academic challenges in university. Lewis (2003) also found differences in identity (based on Marcia's identity status paradigm) in a college sample, and even suggests that, "in the case of identity the college environment is uniquely useful. College students tend to be in the age range of 18 to 22 years, which is the age of identity resolution in most Westernized countries (Marcia, 1993b) (....) The college environment also provides exposure to a number of different ways to resolve identity issues" (p. 161). Michael Berzonsky has conducted a number of studies examining what he terms "identity style," which consists of the social-cognitive approach used by individuals in the different identity statuses to make decisions, problem-solve, and process information relevant to their self-constructs. He has found significant variability in identity styles among young university students (Berzonsky, 1989, 2003; Berzonsky & Kuk, 2000, 2005). All of this research supports our belief that it is likely that both

developmental and default approaches to identity development will be found in a sample of first-year students.

*Psychosocial Correlates of Cluster Membership*

Once we determine that two or more clusters exist within the sample, it will be possible to explore group differences on other variables that may help to expand our understanding of the role cluster membership might play. In particular, we expect to find characteristic differences in psychosocial maturity (variables such as autonomy, industry, identity, and intimacy), indices of psychological well-being (self-esteem and depression), coping style, and social and academic adjustment. There is an abundance of literature that identifies this constellation of factors as interrelated and predictive of emotional and physical health and success in university (Baker, 2003, Beasley, Thompson, & Davidson, 2003, Bersonsky & Kuk, 2000, 2005, Crocker, 2002a, 2002b, Kernis et al., 1998). Because these variables are important indicators of young people's overall levels of functioning, a relationship between these variables and cluster membership will be an important addition to our knowledge of the beginning of the transition to adulthood.

*Psychosocial maturity.* To be mature is to be fully developed, and the connotation is one of finality or arrival. What this means in terms of psychosocial development is a question that has long been discussed in psychology, as how one views a "complete" human being is just as much a philosophical question as it is an empirical one. Researchers have focused on characteristics such as complexity of thought, capacity for intimacy, self-reliance, emotional consistency and control, integrity, and coping ability (Bauer & McAdams, 2004; Greenberger & Sørensen, 1974; Helson & Wink, 1987; Hörnsten, Norberg, & Lundman, 2002). Hogan and Roberts (2004) suggested that

maturity ought to be defined from the perspective of both the actor and the observer. From the observer's perspective, a mature individual is one who is liked and respected by others. Being well-liked entails being agreeable, being emotionally consistent, and contributing to the community. From the internal perspective of the actor, maturity demands emotional stabilty, and the ability to adopt another's viewpoint, which requires tolerance, congeniality, and intellectance. In research on psychosocial maturity, Galambos and Tilton-Weaver (2000) found that mature individuals spent more time on industrious activities such as hobby development, whereas less mature individuals spent more time with peers and involved with pop culture. Further study has also shown mature adolescents to have higher levels of intelligence and executive functioning (skills such as dividing attention, processing speed, inhibitory control, and cognitive flexibility; Galambos, MacDonald, Naphtali, Cohen, & de Frias, 2005). It is realistic to suggest that individuals with such qualities will also be those who take a more active role when it comes to exploring their identity.

As we have discussed, Erikson (1982) viewed development as taking place in stages across the lifespan, with a different quality of maturity coming to fruition during the course of each period. According to his view, at the end of life individuals will have developed psychosocial strength in areas such as hope, will, purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care, and wisdom, each which builds on the strength of the previous virtue. During the transition to adulthood, individuals find themselves in the stage of identity versus identity confusion, through which the attribute of fidelity is emerging and building on those of trust (hope), autonomy (will), initiative (purpose), and industry (competence). Rosenthal, Gurney, and Moore (1981) developed a scale to measure the first six of

Erikson's psychosocial stages. Four of these scales seem particularly appropriate for judging psychosocial maturity among individuals at the start of their transition to adulthood. Specifically, we expect individuals in the developmental individualism cluster to show higher levels of maturity as reflected by higher scores on autonomy, industry (or work orientation), identity, and intimacy compared to those who are turning to society for self-definition.

*Psychological well-being.* Another parallel to default or developmental individualism emphasized in Côté's conceptualization of youth is the distinction between "inner-directed", and "other-directed" people. The "inner-directed" character "exercises choice and initiative" (p. 90) whereas the "other-directed" person is "highly sensitive to others- to their opinions and their approval" (Côté, 2000, p. 91). The difference in self-direction between individuals adopting a default versus developmental approach leads to questions about potential differences in self-esteem. The majority of the research has centered on overall level of self-esteem, with higher levels thought to be more beneficial than lower levels (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003; Haney & Durlak, 1998). However, recently some have challenged this view and opted for a more dynamic approach that looks beyond level to the stability of self-esteem and the areas of life on which it is based (Baumeister et al., 2003; Crocker, 2002a, 2002b; Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper, & Bouvrette, 2003; Crocker, & Park, 2004; Kernis, Cornell, Sun, Berry, & Harlow, 1993; Kernis et al., 1998; Paulhus, & Martin, 1988; Winstok, & Enosh, 2004). Crocker and Park (2004) summarize their research by saying that "the importance of self-esteem lies more in how people strive for it rather than whether it is high or low" (p.392). Each individual has different criteria by which they consider themselves to have value or

worth as a person, referred to as "contingencies" of self-esteem. External contingencies are dependent on the evaluation and approval of others, and therefore self-esteem must be earned. Examples of external contingencies include academic achievement, appearance, and career success. In contrast, internal contingencies such as virtue or God's love are more abstract and are not conditioned on validation from other people. Research has shown that external contingencies are associated with greater fluctuations in self-esteem, stress, aggression, drug and alcohol use, and disordered eating (Crocker, 2002b, Crocker, & Park, 2004).

Self-esteem is likely to distinguish between the clusters due to the differing importance individuals place on the approval of others. In particular, individuals within the developmental cluster are undergoing an intense exploration of their values and viewpoints, and thus it is likely their sense of self-worth comes from the experience of this process and increasing self-awareness, rather than exoteric cues from society. As well, because individuals within the default cluster are believed to be more dependent on identification with the mass culture, we would expect that they would be more sensitive to the opinions and approval of others, and would rely on external confirmation in order to feel positively about themselves. It is therefore predicted that external contingencies should increase across the continuum along which the clusters are placed, with the default cluster being more strongly influenced by others. The opposite trend is expected with regard to internal contingencies, with the developmental cluster depending less on external sources of validation and hence more so on inherent characteristics.

Another indicator of psychological well-being is depression. One recent study of 27,409 American college students found 5% of individuals showed clinical levels of

depressive symptoms (Weitzman, 2004). Another study puts this figure at 13% (Rosenthal, & Schreiner, 2000). Depression has been related to negative self-schemas, emotion-focused coping strategies, social isolation, hopelessness, and sucidal ideation (Chioqueta, & Stiles, 2005; Penland, Masten, Zelhart, Fournet, & Callahan, 2000; Podbury, & Stewart, 2003), though some research suggests that depression can be mediated by self-disclosure and social self-efficacy (Wei, Russell, & Zakalik, 2005). Particularly for women, anxiety and depression are related to academic and interpersonal functioning (Lucas & Berkel, 2005).

At the start of the transition to adulthood, levels of depression are higher in women than men, although new research shows that this gap narrows between the ages of 18 and 25 (Galambos, Barker, & Krahn, 2006). Specific cluster predictions are not made in reference to depression because it is not necessarily clear what the relationship to individualization will be. One might suggest that individuals in the default group would show higher rates of depression due to their predicted coping style and intrinsic self-esteem. However, as discussed in the previous section, both Côté and Arnett suggest that individuals who are grappling with their identities may experience some negativity, and so it is possible the developmental cluster would evidence depressive symptoms as well. Côté further suggests that individuals adopting a default approach are following a "pleasure principle" (2000), thus, if successful, they should evidence *lower* levels of depression.

*Coping style.* According to Kohn, Hay, and Legere (1994), "Coping styles may be defined as consistently applied types of conscious adaptive response to stressful events" (p. 170). Three forms of coping styles have been identified in the literature. The

first is problem or task-focused coping, which involves actively searching for solutions to remedy stressful situations. Emotion-focused coping is aimed at venting or alleviating the stressful feelings associated with an event. Finally, avoidance-focused coping involves evading stressful situations altogether by escaping mentally or physically. Research into coping styles has suggested that individuals who are better problem-solvers or who adopt a more task-focused coping style are better able to adapt to challenges such as the transition to university, and are less vulnerable to psychological dysfunction (Baker, 2003, Beasley et al., 2003). In contrast, individuals who use emotion-focused coping strategies evidence higher levels of distress. Other research has also suggested a relationship between an agentic exploration of identity and problem-oriented coping styles (Berzonsky, 1992, Jordyn & Byrd, 2003, Soenens, Duriez, & Goossens, 2005). Based on this we would expect individuals who adopt a more developmental approach to individualization to also demonstrate more task-focused coping. Individuals within the default cluster are conceptualized as being focused on the approval of others and are not planning adequately for the future, thus we predict that these individuals would be more likely to depend on emotion and avoidance-focused coping strategies.

*Adjustment.* Success in university can have a long-term impact on the life trajectory of an individual. As Buchmann (1989) suggests, "post-industrial society's heavy reliance on technology induces the necessity of extended schooling for a substantial part of the young generation" (p. 84). Similarly, in a report by the Canadian Policy Research Networks, Betcherman (1997) states, "youths have seen a significant deterioration in their labour market position. Education is clearly an important means by which individuals can improve their chances in the labour market. Those who do not

pursue post-secondary studies face an especially difficult labour market and the evidence suggests that this disadvantage is growing" (p.2). Adjustment to university life is an important predictor of program completion. In a national government study of postsecondary enrollment and dropout, Lambert, Zeman, Allen, and Bussière (2004) found that individuals who left programs prior to completion were less interested in or motivated about their academic work and had not made many friends. A number of other studies also found students who had trouble academically and socially in their freshman year were more likely to leave early (Christie, & Dinham, 1991; Pascarella, & Terenzine, 1980). For these reasons, relating cluster membership to social and academic adjustment may not only serve our interpretation of the groups, but may also help contribute to our understanding of who completes post-secondary programs.

In regards to specific predictions, because the characteristics associated with psychosocial maturity and psychological well-being are also related to adjustment measures, one would expect individuals in the developmental cluster to be better adapted *in the long run*; however, it is also possible that individuals who are actively exploring their identities might find themselves more at often at odds with others and more confused about their academic choices at this particular moment. In contrast, individuals in the default group who are more focused on the opinions of others might be more willing to mold themselves to meet other's expectations, and thus show higher levels of adjustment at the present time. Therefore, social and academic adjustment are also included in an exploratory role, in order to help elucidate their relationship to individualization.

*Hypotheses*

Drawing from the theories and literature we have discussed, the research questions are as follows:

1. What clusters of individuals can be found during the transition to adulthood in terms of their approach to identity development? Taking into account the continuum suggested by the theorists, we predict that there will be at least 2 different profiles of individuals who will fall at the relative ends of the spectrum (see Figure 1). The first will evidence characteristics consistent with developmental individualism, and the second, default individualism.

2. What is the relationship between cluster membership and indicators of psychosocial maturity, psychological well-being, coping style, and adjustment? We predict that individuals closer to the developmental end of the spectrum will show higher levels of psychosocial maturity and intrinsic self-esteem than those on the default end. We also predict that individuals with characteristics consistent with developmental individualism will evidence more task-focused coping, whereas those with profiles approximating default individualism will show more avoidance and emotion-focused coping. The variables of depression and social and academic adjustment are considered in an exploratory manner; thus, directional hypotheses are not put forward.

# Chapter II

## Method

### *Participants*

Participants were 169 full-time first-year students at the University of Alberta who agreed to take part in the *Making the Transition* study, and who submitted data relevant to our research questions. This was a large longitudinal web-based study of the health-related behaviors and long-term academic performance of 199 first-year university students, conducted in the fall of 2004. Sixty percent were female (54% of all full-time first-year students ages 19 years or younger in fall term 2004 at the University of Alberta were female). On average participants were 18.4 years of age ($SD$ = .48; range = 17.3 to 19.9). Sixty-two percent self-identified as white, 21% Asian, 10% mixed ethnicity, 5% East Indian, 1% black, and 1% Arab. Fifty-five percent of participants lived with their parents, 30% in university residence, 10% in their own apartment, and 5% were in other living arrangements. None had ever been married; one participant reported cohabitating with another individual. Distribution across faculties was 46% Science, 35% Arts, 11% Engineering, 4% Agriculture, 3% Physical Education, and 1% other. This distribution matches closely with the actual faculty distribution of first-year students at the University of Alberta (36% Science, 29% Arts, 11% Engineering, 6% Agriculture, 4% Physical Education). Eighty-five percent of students indicated that they lived with both parents most of the time while growing up, and that 70% of their mothers and 74% of their fathers had completed college or university.

*Procedure*

To participate, students were required to be 19 years of age or younger, enrolled full-time, and in their first year of any post-secondary education. These restrictions ensured that the sample consisted of students who were just beginning the transition to university. Students were also required to have access to the internet in the evenings, so that they could submit an online (web-based) questionnaire or checklist at the end of each day. All University of Alberta students receive computing accounts and email addresses, 100% have access to computer labs on campus, and 100% in dormitory rooms have high-speed access.

The majority of participants for the *Making the Transition* study were recruited from 12 introductory English classes (English 111; $N = 154$). Most first-year students at the University of Alberta take English 111 to fulfill the English requirement for their program of study. There were 95 sections of English 111 in fall term 2004, each with 35 to 40 students enrolled. Participants were also recruited from one introductory Engineering class because first-year Engineering students do not typically enroll in English 111 ($N = 18$). Some students were recruited through word-of-mouth, that is, they heard about the study and wanted to participate ($N = 14$). Data were collected between September 16 and December 1, 2004.

There were two parts to the larger study. First, students attended an initial group session. Research assistants explained the study in detail and participants signed consent forms and completed a background questionnaire. Part two of the study asked participants to complete an online (web-based) daily checklist for 14 consecutive days. The study was run in four different 2-week periods, with a different group of students

participating in each period (From September through December 2004). Participants were asked to complete the checklist as late as possible before going to sleep each night. On each of the 14 days the same daily checklist appeared. On eight of the 14 days, additional questions or measures appeared at the end of the checklist. These were "one-time-only measures," as they appeared on only one of the 14 days. A $5 honorarium was paid to each participant for each of the days a checklist was completed, to a maximum of $70 for all 14 days.

The measures of psychosocial maturity, depression, and coping style used in this paper were included in the background questionnaire administered during part one of *Making the Transition.* The remaining scales were one-time measures collected during the two week diary portion of the larger study. The self-esteem measure was a one-time survey that appeared on the sixth day, and the measure of the dimensions of emerging adulthood (used to identify the participant's approach to individualism) appeared only on the eighth day. The social and academic adjustment questionnaires appeared on days 12 and 13, respectively. In total, 169 participants (103 females and 66 males) had scores on all subscales of the measures used for cluster analysis relevant to this study.

*Measures*

*Subjective views of emerging adulthood.* Six subscales from the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA) were used to classify individuals in regard to their approach to individualism during this period (Reifman et al., 2003; Appendix A). Each item was prefaced with the phrase "Is this period of your life a…," and was rated on a four point Likert scale ranging from (1) *strongly disagree* to (4) *strongly agree*. The identity exploration (IE) subscale contained 7 items such as "time of finding out who you

are?" and "time of deciding on your own beliefs and values?" The 5-item experimentation/possibilities (EXP) subscale included "time of trying out new things?", and the 7-item instability (INS) subscale included items such as "time of many worries?" and "time of unpredictability?" Other-focus (OF) was evaluated with three items, such as "time of settling down?" and "time of responsibility for others?", and the self-focus (SF) subscale contained 6 items, examples of which are "time of focusing on yourself?" and "time of independence?" Finally, feeling in-between (IB) was measured using three items, including "time of feeling adult in some ways but not others" and "time of gradually becoming an adult". (For all items in the measures see Appendix A). A mean of the items in each subscale was calculated. Higher scores indicate a greater presence of the quality indicated by the scale label. Cronbach's alpha was .78 for the IE subscale, .72 for the EXP subscale, .78 for the NEG subscale, .66 for the OF subscale, .65 for the SF subscale, and .65 for the IB subscale.

*Psychosocial maturity.* Psychosocial maturity was measured using four 12-item subscales from the Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory (EPSI; Rosenthal, Gurney, & Moore, 1981; Appendix B). Specifically, the autonomy subscale contained items such as "I am able to take things as they come" and "I really believe in myself". Industry was measured using items such as "I don't get much done" and "I'm good at my work". The identity subscale included "I don't really feel involved" and "I like myself and am proud of what I stand for". Examples of items from the intimacy subscale are "I have a close physical and emotional relationship with another person" and "Being alone with other people makes me feel uncomfortable". A 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *hardly ever true* to (5) *almost always true* was used to rate each item. Based on Eriksonian

theory, higher scores on each of the subscales reflect a more successful resolution of the "crisis" relevant to four of the first six stages; in other words, greater autonomy, industry, identity development, and intimacy. Coefficient alphas for the subscales were .76, .82, .84, and .82 according to the order they were described. The total scale had an alpha of .91. Mean scores were calculated, after appropriate reverse coding.

*Self-esteem.* The 21-item Extrinsic Contingency Focus Scale (ECFS; Williams & Schimel, 2005; Appendix C) measured self-esteem. This scale assesses externally oriented self-esteem with items such as "I rarely think about how people are evaluating me", "I exercise because it makes me more attractive to others", and "I interact with people at social gatherings without thinking about how they might affect my reputation." Each item was rated on a Likert scale between (1) *strongly disagree* and (5) *strongly agree*. A sum of the responses to all items composed the final score, with possible scores ranging from 21 to 105. Higher scores reflected a greater external basis to self-esteem. Cronbach's alpha was .85.

*Depression.* To measure depression in the previous week a 10-item short form of the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CESD; Andresen, Malmgren, Carter, & Patrick, 1994; Radloff, 1977; Appendix D) was used. Example items include "I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me," "I felt depressed," and "My sleep was restless." Questions were answered according to a 4-point Likert scale labeled "Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)," "Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)," "Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)," and "Most or all of the time (5-7 days)." Positively worded items were recoded so the average of all items reflected more depressive symptoms. Cronbach's alpha was .75.

*Coping style.* The Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS; Endler & Parker, 1999) measured three aspects of coping style. Each subscale contained 16 items scored on a 5-point Likert scale with poles (1) *Not at All* and (5) *Very Much.* The task-focused coping subscale reflects the use of directed problem-solving behaviors in order to generate solutions to stressful situations. Emotion-focused coping involves self-oriented strategies (e.g., self-blame or daydreaming), aimed at reducing the negative feelings caused by stress. The avoidance-focused coping subscale describes activities that enable the individual to ignore the stressor through distraction or social diversion. The alpha values for the subscales were .88, .88, and .80 respectively. A sum of all items in each subscale reflects the degree to which each coping strategy is used. Possible scores for each subscale range from 16 to 80. Due to copyright permission regulations the full scales does not appear in an appendix.

*Social and academic adjustment.* Adjustment to university was measured using two subscales from the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker & Siryk, 1989). Some items were changed to reflect differences between the Canadian and American context (i.e., "college" was changed to "university"). The social adjustment subscale contained 20 items rated on a Likert scale with 9 options ranging from (1) *Applies Very Closely to Me* to (9) *Doesn't Apply to Me At All.* This subscale reflects the degree to which an individual is fitting in socially with the university environment, making friends, and dealing with loneliness and homesickness. An identical Likert scale was used for the 24-item academic adjustment subscale, which includes motivation, effort, performance, and overall satisfaction with the academic environment. Negatively worded items were reverse coded so that higher total scores indicate better adjustment on

each dimension. Possible scores for the social adjustment subscale ranged from 20 to 180, and 24 to 216 for the academic adjustment subscale. Cronbach's alphas were .91 and .87 for the respective subscales. Two subscales from the SACQ, Personal-Emotional Adjustment and Attachment, were not included in the study due to item overlap with other measures. None of the subscale items appear in an appendix due to copyright restrictions.

# Chapter III

## Results and Analyses

### *Descriptive Statistics*

Means, standard deviation, and intercorrelations of the IDEA subscales are presented in Table 1. The average values are all above 3 for each of the subscales except other-focus, indicating that the majority of individuals agree or strongly agree with the items reflecting each dimension. The highest mean is for the experimentation/possibilities subscale, which also has the second smallest standard deviation, suggesting a general consensus that the period of emerging adulthood is a time of open choice and opportunity. In contrast, the lowest mean is on the dimension of other-focus, indicating that many individuals disagree with the idea that it is a time of responsibility and commitment. Correlations between the subscales show that individuals who view themselves in a period of identity exploration are also likely to endorse the idea of experimentation/possibilities. They are also likely to be more self-focused and feel in-between. Feeling in-between is also related to negativity/instability.

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for psychosocial maturity, psychological well-being, coping style, and adjustment. Based on the general average scores, the sample appears to be fairly mature, relatively even in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic self-esteem, not too depressed, mainly relying on task-focused coping strategies, and relatively well-adjusted. These measures are highly intercorrelated, which is consistent with the academic understanding of these variables. Positive relationships exist between psychosocial maturity, intrinsic self-esteem, task-focused coping, and adjustment.

Table 1

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations Among IDEA subscales*

| Subscales | *M* | *SD* | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Identity Exploration | 3.22 | .52 | | | | | |
| 2. Experimentation/ Possibilities | 3.39 | .44 | .49* | | | | |
| 3. Negativity/ Instability | 3.03 | .52 | .13 | .05 | | | |
| 4. Other-focus | 2.37 | .65 | .15 | .05 | -.04 | | |
| 5. Self-focus | 3.30 | .40 | .40* | .56* | -.02 | .03 | |
| 6. Feeling In-Between | 3.17 | .62 | .48* | .19* | .35* | .05 | .16* |

*Note.* $N$=169. The possible range for all six subscales is 1 to 4. *$p < 0.05$.

Table 2

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations Among Dependent Variables*

| Variables | *M* | *SD* | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Psychosocial Maturity | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Autonomy[a] | 3.84 | .49 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Industry[a] | 3.84 | .52 | .50* | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Identity[a] | 3.70 | .63 | .74* | .63* | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Intimacy[a] | 3.74 | .62 | .34* | .26* | .43* | | | | | | | |
| Psychological Well-being | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Self-Esteem[b] | 53.87 | 11.87 | -.25* | -.25* | -.27* | -.17* | | | | | | |
| 6. Depression[c] | 1.04 | .49 | -.52* | -.41* | -.53* | -.24* | .25* | | | | | |
| Coping Style | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7. Task-focused[d] | 54.39 | 9.19 | .48* | .52* | .44* | .19* | -.11 | -.32* | | | | |
| 8. Emotion-focused[d] | 41.03 | 10.95 | -.60* | -.43* | -.56* | -.27* | .38* | .65* | -.30* | | | |
| 9. Avoidance-focused[d] | 44.67 | 9.86 | .00 | -.10 | -.01 | .33* | .08 | -.04 | -.01 | .11 | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adjustment | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10. Social Adjustment[e] | 118.94 | 25.53 | .33* | .26* | .44* | .47* | -.16 | -.37* | .18* | -.31* | .25* | |
| 11. Academic Adjustment[f] | 127.45 | 26.37 | .30* | .49* | .51* | .16* | -.17* | -.44* | .42* | -.39* | .09 | .49* |

*Note.* $N$=153-169. [a] possible range: 1 to 5. [b] possible range: 21-105. [c] possible range: 0 to 3. [d] possible range: 16-80. [e] possible range: 20 to 180. [f] possible range: 24 to 216. *$p < 0.05$.

Positive relationships also exist between depression, emotion-focused coping, and extrinsic self-esteem. The two sets of relationships are negatively related to one-another. One exception to this is the positive, though small, relationship between avoidance-focused coping and the intimacy subscale of psychosocial maturity. Perhaps this is due to an avoidance of conflict in relationships.

*Cluster Determination*

In order to examine the cluster patterns in the data (Research Question #1), the six IDEA subscales were standardized to eliminate any unintentional weighing of variables due to differences in variance. First, a hierarchical cluster analysis was conducted using Ward's method (Ward, 1963) and squared Euclidean distance. Ward's method minimizes the sum of the squared variance within clusters in comparison to the sum of the squared variance between clusters. As an agglomerative method of hierarchical cluster analysis, Ward's method begins with each case as its own cluster and then combines the cases that result in the lowest increase in the total within-cluster error sum of squares until all cases are merged in a single cluster (Ward, 1963, p. 238). It is up to the researcher to determine the proper cut-off point at which clusters are most meaningful. In this study, cluster membership was saved for 2, 3, 4 and 5 cluster solutions.

The centroids of these cluster solutions were then used to conduct a k-means cluster analysis to further clarify the partitions in the data. A k-means analysis is an iterative method of clustering in which an initial number of clusters are decided a priori by the researchers and cases are assigned to the cluster whose centroid to which they are closest (again using squared Euclidean distance as a proximity measurement). Following

the assignment of each case to a cluster the centroids are re-computed, continuing until no cases change clusters. According to Aldenderfer and Blashfield (1984), one of the advantages of iterative partitioning is the ability to make multiple passes through the data, which helps to compensate for any error in initial clustering (hierarchical methods can be sensitive to the ordering of the data and other factors). The centroids from the 2, 3, 4 and 5 cluster solutions to the Ward's analysis were used as the initial cluster centers for the k-means analysis, and the final cluster membership was saved and used for further analysis.

Clustering methods necessitate interpretation by the researcher. In particular, the number of partitions or clusters determined to be present in the data is a subjective matter and largely relies on heuristic procedures to arrive at a solution (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984). Scree plots, dendograms, fusion coefficients, and variable patterns were all examined for each of the 2, 3, 4, and 5 cluster solutions. Scree plots and dendograms are both visual representations of the fusion coeffients, which are the numerical values of the point where cases are combined into a particular cluster. When each case represents its own cluster prior to the hierarchical analysis the fusion coefficient is zero, and as each case is added to a cluster the fusion coefficient becomes incrementally larger until the process is finished. When cases relatively close together are combined, the fusion coefficient is increased only a small amount. In contrast, when cases or clusters that are a greater distance apart are combined together the fusion coefficient makes a larger "jump" in size. For this reason, a sudden increase in the fusion coefficient at a certain merger suggests that relatively dissimilar cases have been combined, and thus the number of clusters prior to that point represents a good separation

of the data (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984). In this case, the fusion coefficient "jumped" from 676.20 to 779.27 (a difference of 103.07) when three clusters were combined into two, from 620.87 to 676.20 for four to three (a difference of only 55.33), and 574.63 to 620.87 for five to four (a jump of 46.24). This suggested that the three-cluster solution was most appropriate.

The scree plot is a graph of the fusion coefficients against the number of clusters in the data, and can be analyzed to determine the point at which the line "levels off," indicating a large jump in the coefficients. The dendogram is a tree that reflects the hierarchical structure of the data as well as the numerical point at which clusters are combined. A visual assessment is made as to the best level at which to "cut" the tree, based on the length of the stems of the tree that reflect the differences in the size of the fusion coefficients. Judgment of both the scree plot and dendogram in this study confirmed the three-cluster solution.

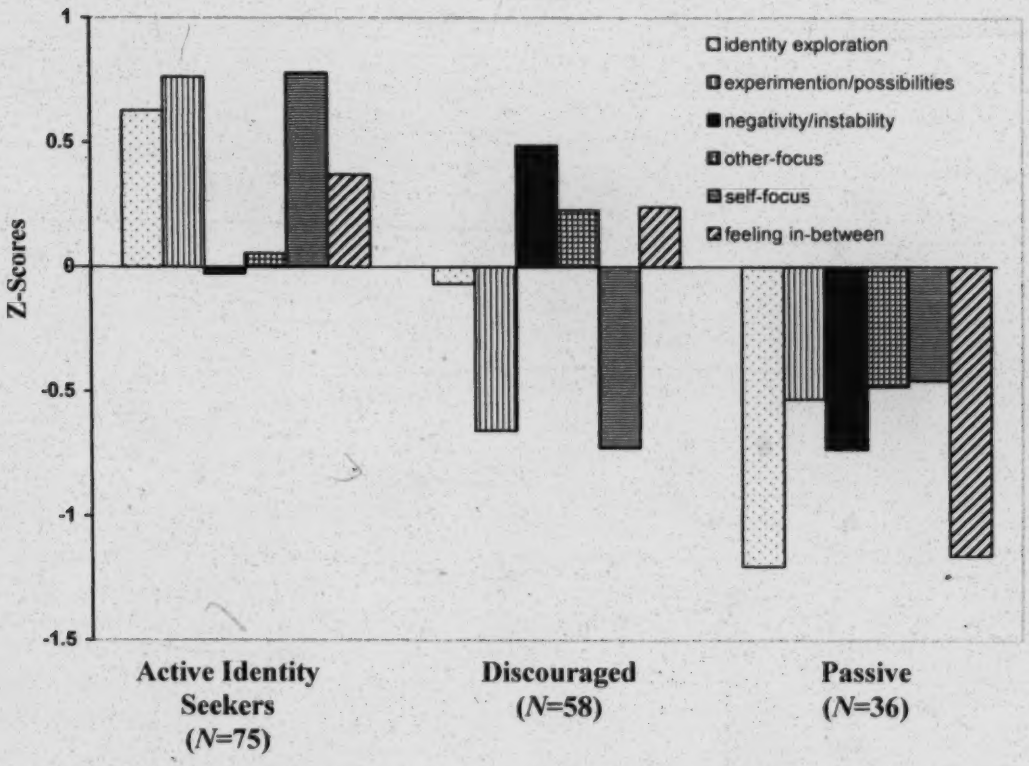
Another tool used to determine the number of clusters in the data is the profile of the dependent variables in each cluster. By examining the means and z-scores of each variable, theoretically significant patterns can be detected, as can theoretically meaningless groupings. The size of each cluster is also an important factor, as extremely small clusters are statistically problematic in other analyses. The three-cluster solution generated one group that scored above the mean in identity exploration, experimentation/possibilities, self-focus, and feeling in between. They were slightly above average in other-focus, and slightly below average in negativity ($N$=75). The second cluster was above the mean for negativity, other-focus, and feeling in between,

and below the mean for the identity exploration, experimentation/possibilities, and self-focus ($N$=58). The third group was the smallest ($N$=36), and showed a profiles of scores below average for each variable (see Figure 2). In comparison, the two cluster solution divided the cases almost equally in half with one group that scored above the mean on all variables, and another that scored below the mean on all variables. This pattern was theoretically uninteresting. Furthermore, a one-way ANOVA conducted on the variables used to create the two clusters showed that two of the variables (negativity/instability and other-focus) did not significantly differentiate the two clusters. Thus the two-cluster solution seemed inappropriate. Comparatively, each variable in the three, four, and five cluster solutions had significantly different means between at least two of the clusters. The four and five cluster solutions both produced theoretically interesting cluster profiles; however, the size of at least one of the clusters was lower than 20 in each situation, limiting usefulness in further analysis. Based on a combined assessment of the fusion coefficients, scree plot, dendrogram, and variable profiles, a three-cluster solution was determined to be the best representation of partitions in the data.

*Validation of the Three-Cluster solution*

In order to examine the internal validity of the three-cluster solution, a series of cluster analyses were conducted on three random split-half samples of the data. Each of the six halves were subjected to a hierarchical cluster analysis using Ward's method followed by a k-means analysis in an identical fashion to that for the full data set. An analysis of the fusion coefficients clearly suggested a three-cluster solution in five of the six subsamples, and was not ruled out in the sixth. The visual representations of these

Figure 2. *Three-cluster solution based on subscales from the Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA). The bars represent z-scores, or differences from the grand mean in standard deviation units.*



values in dendograms and scree plots also highlighted three partitions in the data. One-way ANOVA results were generally the same as those for the full sample. The two cluster solutions did not evidence significant differences between the clusters on at least one variable, and the four and five cluster solutions, while providing more clearly separated clusters had unacceptably small cell sizes. The variable profiles for each cluster of each solution were evaluated and compared, and replications of the clusters generated in the full sample were found most consistently with the three-cluster solutions.

Crosstabulations were examined to determine how well cluster membership for a given subsample matched the cluster membership determined by the analysis for the full sample. The first subsample assigned between 83 and 94% of cases to the same clusters as the full sample analysis (94% of the cases assigned to the first cluster in the full sample analysis were also assigned to the first cluster in the sample analysis, etc.), the second subsample made the same assignment for between 72 and 100% of cases, the third between 50 and 93%, the fourth between 63 and 82%, the fifth between 87 and 100%, and the sixth between 60 and 91%. The lowest levels of agreement were generally in regards to the third cluster, indicating it might be somewhat less stable relative to the first two clusters.

*Three Cluster Definitions and Descriptions*

Once the three-cluster solution was determined to be the most statistically accurate representation of partitions in the data, the profiles of the groups were examined in order to understand their theoretical implications (see Figure 2). Each cluster was labeled according to its defining characteristics relative to the other clusters. An

ANOVA was conducted to determine which of the IDEA subscales significantly distinguished the groups from one another. Because cluster analysis is designed to create maximum separation between clusters, it was expected that all subscales would have significant main effects: identity exploration, Wilks' Lambda $F(2,168)=78.78$, $p<.05$, experimentation/possibilities, Wilks' Lambda $F(2,168)=73.41$, $p<.05$, negativity/instability, Wilks' Lambda $F(2,168)=20.39$, $p<.05$, other-focused, Wilks' Lambda $F(2,168)=6.11$, $p<.05$, self-focused, Wilks' Lambda $F(2,168)=82.01$, $p<.05$, and feeling in-between, Wilks' Lambda $F(2,168)=48.74$, $p<.05$. Means, standard deviations, and post hoc comparisons (Tukey's HSD) are shown in Table 3.

Individuals in the first of the three clusters identified in our sample are labeled *active identity seekers*. These individuals are characterized by above average scores on the identity exploration, experimentation/possibilities, and self-focused subscales. This indicates that significantly more individuals in this cluster strongly agreed with items in these subscales than did individuals in the other two clusters. These active identity seekers were close to the overall mean on the dimensions of negativity/instability and other-focus. This group fairly strongly endorsed feeling in-between, although not significantly more so than those in the second cluster (the means for both clusters were significantly higher than that of the third). In sum, this group of individuals appears to be the most reflective of Arnett's "emerging adults." They feel they are in a period of figuring out who they are, and choosing from among the myriad of options they perceive as available to them. They feel independent and have a sense of personal freedom, though without being unconcerned about responsibilities and commitments to others.

Finally, while they may feel somewhat in-between, this group seems to be on the right track to taking full advantage of the moratorium they may be experiencing.

In stark contrast to the active identity seekers, the second cluster that emerged in the data is distinguished primarily by high levels of negativity/instability. They also have relatively low scores on the experimentation/possibilities and self-focus subscales, though not significantly lower than the third cluster, and relatively high scores on the dimensions of other-focus and feeling in-between, though not significantly higher than those in the first cluster. Lastly, their opinion of being in a time of identity exploration is close to the overall mean, though significantly different than that of the other two groups. Due mainly to their high levels of negativity, and the combination of a high level of other-focus and a low level of self-focus, they are termed *discouraged.* These individuals appear to be having the most difficult time with this period of their lives. They report feeling worried, confused, and not sure if they are adolescents or adults. They do not report feeling particularly focused on themselves or others, and they do not particularly support the idea that they are in a period of defining themselves or trying out new things.

The final cluster that emerged contained individuals termed *passive.* The profile for this group shows them to be below average on all measures, significantly lower than the other two clusters in terms of identity exploration, other-focus, negativity, and feeling in-between. They also have low scores on experimentation/possibilities and self-focus, though not significantly different than the discouraged cluster. The questionnaire used in this study asked participants about "this period of [their] life," and this cluster appears to view this period rather passively relative to their peers. They do not agree that it is a time

Table 3

*Means and Standard Deviations for IDEA Subscales by Cluster*

| | Active Identity Seekers | | Discouraged | | Passive | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Subscales | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| Identity Exploration | $3.55_a$ | .29 | $3.19_b$ | .36 | $2.60_c$ | .53 |
| Experimentation/Possibilities | $3.73_a$ | .24 | $3.10_b$ | .34 | $3.16_b$ | .44 |
| Negativity/Instability | $3.12_a$ | .52 | $3.29_b$ | .37 | $2.65_c$ | .52 |
| Other-focus | $2.40_a$ | .62 | $2.52_a$ | .63 | $2.06_b$ | .67 |
| Self-focus | $3.61_a$ | .23 | $3.01_b$ | .29 | $3.12_b$ | .37 |
| Feeling In-Between | $3.40_a$ | .44 | $3.32_a$ | .46 | $2.45_b$ | .62 |

*Note.* $N$=169. The possible range for all six subscales is 1 to 4. Means with different subscripts are significantly different, $p < .05$ (Tukey's HSD).

of stress or pressure, nor do they particularly feel they are undergoing a process of deciding on their own beliefs and values or planning for the future. While they do not disagree that they are in a time of open choice and independence, their average scores suggest they are less enthused about these possibilities than some other youth their age. In sum, this group appears to be mainly "going with the flow" or living for the moment.

*Cluster Differences in Maturity and Adjustment*

To answer Research Question #2, the relationships between cluster membership and psychosocial maturity, self-esteem, depression, coping style, and social and academic adjustment were examined. Two multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs) and two univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted. The first MANOVA included the four subscales of the psychosocial maturity scale, and the second contained the measures of self-esteem, depression, and coping. Two separate ANOVAs were used to test for differences on the social and academic adjustment measures. The analyses were structured this way to (a) maximize the number of cases available for each analysis, and (b) group together dependent variables that were conceptually related. Results are presented in Table 4.

Prior to conducting these analyses, initial tests were used to determine if cluster differences existed on several demographic variables. Chi-square tests for ethnicity, age, parental education, and program of study found no relationship with group membership. However, there was a significant effect of gender ($\chi^2$=8.61, *df*=2, $p$<.05). In the active cluster the gender split was approximately 71% females and 29% males, similar to the discouraged cluster which was 60% female. In contrast, the passive cluster had a

majority of males (58%). Given these large gender splits, sex was included along with cluster membership as a fixed variable when looking at other outcomes.

There was also a significant difference between the clusters in terms of their current residence ($\chi^2$=18.663, *df*=4, *p*=.001). Individuals in the discouraged cluster were more likely than those in the other two clusters to be living with their parents and relatives (81% versus 50% for the active identity seekers and 44.1% for the passive cluster). This is an interesting finding given the discouraged cluster's high level of other focus and feeling in between. It is possible that being in this environment limits the ability of these youth to explore their independence by encouraging familial responsibility. It is also possible that individuals who are strongly tied to their families or less eager to develop their independence are more likely to choose to stay at home while attending university rather than stay in residence or get their own apartment. In either case, this finding reinforces the importance of looking at family relationships when studying individuals making the transition to adulthood.

*Psychosocial maturity.* A 2x3 (sex x cluster) MANOVA was conducted using the four subscales of the EPSI (autonomy, industry, identity, and intimacy) as dependent variables. The multivariate tests showed a significant main effect of cluster, Wilks' Lambda $F(8,320)=2.94$, $p<.05$, and gender, Wilks' Lambda $F(4,160)=2.89$, $p<.05$. There was no significant interaction between the two variables. Univariate tests showed a significant effect of cluster on all four of the subscales: autonomy (Wilks' Lambda $F(2,163)=10.78$, $p<.05$), industry (Wilks' Lambda $F(2,163)=3.19$, $p<.05$), identity (Wilks' Lambda $F(2,163)=8.72$, $p<.05$), and intimacy (Wilks' Lambda $F(2,163)=3.20$,

$p<.05$). Post hoc pairwise comparisons (Tukey's HSD) showed that the discouraged cluster had lower means than both the active identity seekers and the passive on measures of identity and autonomy, and lower scores than the active identity seekers on measures of intimacy and industry. Univariate tests for gender found a significant effect only for the intimacy subscale, with females scoring higher than males (females' $M=3.84$, $SD=.59$; males' $M=3.58$, $SD=.65$).

*Self-esteem, depression, and coping style.* A second 2x3 (sex x cluster) MANOVA examining self-esteem, depression, and coping also found multivariate main effects of cluster (Wilks' Lambda $F(10,286)=2.45$, $p<.05$), and gender (Wilks' Lambda $F(5,143)=3.74$, $p<.05$). Again, there was no significant interaction between these two variables. At the univariate level, clusters differed significantly on self-esteem, Wilks' Lambda $F(2,147)=5.05$, $p<.05$, depression, Wilks' Lambda $F(2,147)=3.99$, $p<.05$, task-focused coping, Wilks' Lambda $F(2,147)=4.69$, $p<.05$, and emotion-focused coping, $F(2,147)=7.49$, $p<.05$. Avoidance- focused coping did not significantly differ at the univariate level. Pairwise comparisons show that the discouraged had significantly higher extrinsic self-esteem than did the passive, and significantly higher levels of depression than both other clusters. In terms of coping style, the active identity seekers reported significantly more task-focused coping than did the discouraged, who themselves reported greater amounts of emotion-focused coping than did active or passive groups. Gender had a significant effect at the univariate level on measures of depression, Wilks' Lambda $F(1,147)=7.85$, $p<.05$, and avoidance-focused coping, Wilks' Lambda $F(1,147)=7.33$, $p<.05$. Females had significantly higher levels of depression

Table 4

*Means and Standard Deviations for all Dependent Variables by Cluster*

| | | Active Identity Seekers | | Discouraged | | Passive | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dependent Variable | *N* | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| Psychosocial Maturity | | | | | | | |
| Autonomy[a] | 169 | $3.99_a$ | .41 | $3.60_b$ | .50 | $3.90_a$ | .49 |
| Industry[a] | 169 | $3.97_a$ | .52 | $3.69_b$ | .52 | 3.81 | .47 |
| Identity[a] | 169 | $3.89_a$ | .59 | $3.40_b$ | .60 | $3.76_a$ | .60 |
| Intimacy[a] | 169 | $3.88_a$ | .62 | $3.60_b$ | .61 | 3.67 | .59 |
| Psychological Well-being | | | | | | | |
| Self-esteem[b] | 156 | 52.75 | 12.97 | $57.31_a$ | 11.47 | $50.34_b$ | 8.39 |
| Depression[c] | 156 | $.98_a$ | .49 | $1.20_b$ | .46 | $.90_a$ | .47 |
| Coping Style | | | | | | | |
| Task-focused[d] | 156 | $57.14_a$ | 9.16 | $51.75_b$ | 8.06 | 55.25 | 9.76 |
| Emotion-focused[d] | 156 | $39.03_a$ | 9.82 | $45.42_b$ | 10.68 | $36.63_a$ | 9.72 |
| Avoidance-focused[d] | 156 | 44.61 | 10.91 | 44.98 | 7.88 | 42.06 | 10.27 |
| Adjustment | | | | | | | |
| Social Adjustment[e] | 158 | $125.02_a$ | 23.82 | $111.43_b$ | 23.44 | 116.60 | 31.12 |
| Academic Adjustment[f] | 163 | $132.58_a$ | 27.03 | $119.87_b$ | 21.56 | 132.03 | 27.01 |

*Note.* [a] possible range: 1 to 5. [b] possible range: 21-105. [c] possible range: 0 to 3. [d] possible range: 16-80. [e] possible range: 20 to 180. [f] possible range: 24 to 216. Means with different subscripts are significantly different, $p < .05$ (Tukey's HSD).

($M$=1.13, $SD$=.50) than males ($M$=0.91, $SD$=.44), and also significantly higher levels of avoidance-focused coping (females' $M$=2.87, $SD$=.64; males' $M$=2.60, $SD$=.54).

*Social adjustment.* In the 2x3 (sex x cluster) ANOVA for social adjustment a significant main effect of cluster was found, Wilks' Lambda $F(2,152)=3.90$, $p<.05$, but there was no main effect of sex or an interaction between sex and cluster. Tukey's pairwise comparison showed that the active identity seekers had significantly higher levels of social adjustment than did the discouraged cluster.

*Academic adjustment.* A final 2x3 (sex x cluster) ANOVA tested for differences in academic adjustment among the groups. Results showed only a main effect of cluster membership, Wilks' Lambda $F(2,157)=3.06$, $p=.05$. Post hoc analysis revealed significantly higher levels of academic adjustment among active identity seekers than those labeled discouraged.

# Chapter IV

## Discussion

The goal of this study was to investigate the approaches taken by individuals in considering this period of their lives. This exploration was framed in terms of Arnett's theory of emerging adulthood and Côté's conceptualization of default versus developmental individualization. The results of the study will now be addressed with reference to these constructs and the primary research questions, followed by a discussion of strengths and weaknesses in the project, and possible future directions of inquiry.

### *Three Views of the Period: The Results of Cluster Analysis*

The first research question asked whether different clusters of individuals would be found based on their subjective views of their current period of life. It was hypothesized based primarily on Côté's work that at least two distinct groups would emerge, one characterized as taking a developmental approach to individualization (actively exploring identity issues in an attempt to establish themselves as autonomous adults), and the second taking a default approach (passively adopting identities available to them through mainstream culture or significant others). Our results showed three clusters in the data, labeled active identity seekers, discouraged, and passive. A comparison of these clusters with the original hypothesized groups suggests that Côté's developmental approach is best represented by the active identity seekers, and the default approach by the passive. The discouraged fit neither profile clearly. In order to connect the groups found in this study with those proposed in Figure 1, it is instrumental to speak of the two hypothesized clusters (developmental and default) in terms of their relative

scores to one another on each element of emerging adulthood, rather than their overall level of endorsement of each theme.

The first cluster identified in this study, active identity seekers, best approximates those individuals who would be termed to have adopted developmental individualization. As shown in Panel A of Figure 1, the developmental cluster was predicted to have higher levels of identity exploration than the default group, a finding reflected in significantly higher endorsement of identity exploration items among our active identity seekers. The developmental cluster was also predicted to have higher levels of other-focus and feeling in-between, which is consistent with the results that active identity seekers were higher on both these dimensions than were the passive, and while they were not higher than the discouraged, they did not differ significantly from them. In terms of negativity or instability, it was hypothesized that individuals undertaking developmental individualism would have higher levels than those in the default group due to the inherent tensions surrounding identity exploration. In fact, active identity seekers did have significantly higher levels of negativity than did the passive, who had the lowest levels of identity exploration.

The passive fit most closely with the hypothesized default individualization profile. As shown in panel B of Figure 1, the default cluster was characterized by high levels of experimentation/possibilities and self-focus, with a moderate level of negativity/instability and feeling in-between lower than that of the developmental group, and much lower levels of identity exploration and other focus. Consistent with this, the passive had significantly lower levels of identity exploration, negativity/instability, other-

focus, and feeling in between than the other two groups. While the dimensions of experimentation/possibilities and self-focus were not higher than the active identity seekers, it is notable that this group was closer to the mean on these two dimensions than on others such as identity exploration, and they did not differ significantly from the discouraged. Despite the fact that this cluster diverged somewhat from the hypothesized profile, it is relatively consistent with Côté's conceptualization of default individualization. Côté (2000) described individuals who adopted a default approach as being passive in their identity development, involved in "a life course dictated by circumstance and folly, with little agentic assertion on the part of the person" (p. 33). Certainly the fact that the passive showed significantly less endorsement of all dimensions of emerging adulthood than the active identity seekers suggests that, at least relative to their peers, they were taking a more unassertive role in their development.

The two dimensions in which the active identity seekers do not match the predicted developmental cluster and the passive do not match the predicted default cluster are self-focus and experimentation/possibilities. It was predicted that subjects undertaking a developmental approach to individualization would have lower levels on both measures than would individuals taking a default route, but results show that active identity seekers showed more endorsement of these themes than did either of the other two clusters. The original hypotheses were made on the basis of the idea that default individuals would show *excessive* levels of self-focus and optimism due to a hedonistic, in-the-moment approach to life, rather than the idea that individuals adopting a developmental approach would not be self-focused or feel they were in a period of

experimentation/possibility. Côté (2000) suggests that accompanying the societal trend toward passive, default individualization is a "normality of narcissism" (p. 191), in which individuals seek self-gratification and validation above all else. Furthermore, he acknowledges that this trend is endorsed by postmodern theorists who suggest that "if one avoids attempting to locate or build an inner character… and acts in terms of the impulses and demands of the present, one can… experience a sense of tremendous possibility" (p. 104). However, as discussed earlier, Côté also submits that a certain amount of self-focus is necessary for identity exploration, and for individuals willing to undertake a developmental approach, it truly is a time full of possibility and ripe for experimentation.

In terms of self-focus, one possibility is that the IDEA subscale does not capture the egotistic nature of narcissism, but only the concentration on self required for identity exploration. This would be consistent with Arnett's positive view of the nature of self-focus in emerging adults. As he suggests, "the goal of their self-focusing is self-sufficiency… a necessary step before committing themselves to enduring relationships with others, in love and work" (Arnett, 2000b, p. 14). In contrast to self-absorption that seeks continuous external affirmation, the self-focus characteristic of active identity seekers may not be at the expense of others. The items in the subscale used in this study do reflect the importance self-sufficiency and taking responsibility for oneself, aspects of self-focus that may not be seen as readily among individuals taking the easy, "path of least resistance" characteristic of default individualization. If this is the case, then it

would be logical that active identity seekers would score more highly on this dimension than those considered passive.

A similar explanation based on the wording of subscale items can be made in regards to experimentation/possibilities. The original hypothesis that default individuals would be highest on this dimension was based on the speculation that individuals who were passively choosing from among the numerous, pre-packaged identities offered by modern society (see Côté, 2000) would feel that they did have a multitude of options available to them, whereas individuals who were taking a developmental approach would be more attuned to the limitations that are present in reality. However, this assumption may be based too much on the half of the dimension pertaining to possibility, and not enough to the half referring to experimentation. The latter construct includes a degree of agency that is not reflected in the simple perception of choice or possibility. In order to consider themselves in a period of "exploration", "experimentation", and "trying out new things" (all items in the subscale), the individual would have to be accepting a certain degree of control and self-direction over their lives- characteristics of developmental, rather than default, individualization. Therefore, despite the unsupported hypotheses in regards to self-focus and experimentation/possibilities, it is in accordance with both the theories of Arnett and Côté that active identity seekers are adopting a developmental approach and the passive are representative of the default approach.

The third cluster found in the present study, labeled discouraged, correspond with neither developmental nor default individualization. This group showed high levels of negativity coupled with an average amount of identity exploration which was

significantly lower than that of active identity seekers, but significantly higher than that of the passive. Interestingly, they were similar to active identity seekers in terms of other-focus and feeling in-between, but more akin to the passive on the dimensions of experimentation/possibilities and self-focus. One potential interpretation of this group is that they represent individuals who have the desire to actively explore their identities and options, but are prevented from doing so either by the excessive demands of others or a lack of psychological resources necessary to become self-sufficient. Unlike the passive who happily acquiesce to default options, these individuals may desire autonomy but do not feel they are in a period of open choice or experimentation because they are hindered in some way. Yoder (2000) has put forth a model that incorporates an understanding of the impediments some individuals face when attempting to develop their identity. As she explains:

> Assessment of an individual's [identity] status focuses on the presence or absence of: (a) consideration of a range of identity alternatives; (b) the appearance of clear self-definition; (c) commitments regarding goals, values, and beliefs; (d) activity and behavior directed toward implementation of commitments; and (e) a sense of confidence in one's future (Waterman, 1982). *Barriers*, however, reflect external limitations imposed upon these processes. Located in the socio-cultural environment and framed in terms of socio-economic circumstance, a broad category which encompasses society, family, and work environments, barriers expand descriptions of identity status to specifically include or exclude, conditions over which an individual has little or

no control, but which affect, often profoundly, his or her developmental options. (p. 98)

According to Côté, present societal conditions demand a degree of "psychosocial vitalities and capacities" that "should give individuals the *wherewithal* to understand and negotiate the various social, occupational, and personal obstacles and opportunities encountered throughout (late-modern) adult life" (1997, p. 578). Discouraged individuals might reflect those without such psychosocial skills, or without the "identity capital" suggested to be necessary by Côté (1997, 2000). In addition, facing obstacles could help explain why the discouraged showed significantly higher levels of negativity than the other two clusters.

One specific difficulty that might be confronting the discouraged is conflict resulting from an attempt to mesh a high level of commitment and responsibility to others with a desire to explore their identities. These individuals do not appear to have the level of self-focus that might be required to develop a healthy form of autonomy. Thus, they may see their connection to others and desire for self-examination as a divided loyalty, rather than a necessary step in the process of becoming an adult. This would also help explain why they show lower levels of experimentation/possibilities, if they simply do not view a way to resolve the conflict in a positive and self-directed manner in the future. Reifman et al. (2003) suggest the "possibility that parents' failure to allow autonomy to develop in their children may dampen the latter's experience of emerging adulthood-relevant perceptions and sense of future orientation" (p. 24). These individuals could be those who feel bound to the expectations of others, but who experience high levels of

negativity when required to stifle their own need to function as autonomous adults and make their own decisions.

*Clarifying the Clusters: Relationships with Maturity and Adjustment*

The second research question addressed whether cluster differences would be found on other variables that have a theoretical relationship with the dimensions of emerging adulthood. Subjects of interest included psychosocial maturity [autonomy, industry, identity, and intimacy], self-esteem, depression, coping style, and social and academic adjustment. Overall, results showed no significant differences between the active identity seekers and the passive, but some significant differences between the discouraged and the other two clusters in each domain.

The fact that active identity seekers had high levels of psychosocial maturity, more intrinsic than extrinsic self-esteem, low levels of depression, a high level of task-focused coping, and high levels of adjustment compared to the other clusters is consistent with our predictions and Côté's (2000) theory that a certain level of "identity capital" is required to take full developmental advantage of the period of emerging adulthood. According to his argument, "*identity capital* denotes what individuals "invest" in "who they are" (p. 209). Such "investment" can be in the form of tangible, or "socially visible", and intangible, or psychological, resources. Tangible resources include "educational credentials (educational capital), fraternity or sorority and club or association memberships (social capital), personal deportment (e.g., manner of dress, physical attractiveness, and speech patterns), and the like" (p. 209). Intangible resources include "qualities like the holding of commitments, ego strength, self-efficacy, cognitive

flexibility and complexity, critical thinking abilities, moral reasoning abilities, and other character attributes" (p. 210). Both types of resources enable the individual to effectively negotiate and function in society and institutions such as work and education (Côté, 2002). Based on this study, it appears that active identity seekers do have more of these resources at least in terms of maturity, self-esteem, and better problem-focused coping skills, and perhaps these resources are what enable them to take a more developmental approach to their individualization. Their low levels of depression and better social and academic adjustment are also testaments to their development, factors which may also serve to maintain adaptive functioning in the future.

It is also consistent with this theory that individuals who do not have identity capital face greater challenges when confronted with obstacles, an idea reflected in the fact that the discouraged had the lowest level of maturity, more extrinsic than intrinsic self-esteem, high levels of depression, high levels of emotion-focused coping, and low levels of adjustment. Furthermore, as discussed previously, there is a large body of literature that supports the relationships between these variables, for example extrinsic self-esteem and depression (Crocker, 2002a, 2002b, Crocker & Park, 2004, Crocker et al. 2003, Kernis et al. 1993, 1998), and coping and adjustment (Baker, 2003, Beasley et al. 2003). However, it cannot be determined decisively from this study whether membership in the discouraged cluster is a result of lower levels of maturity, poor coping skills, poor adjustment, and depression that make these individuals unable to deal with ordinary obstacles, or if they have faced unusual barriers to their identity exploration that has resulted in less opportunity to develop the maturity, intrinsic self-esteem and coping

skills over time and makes them vulnerable to depression and maladjustment. Longitudinal research is needed to further explore the causal order of these variables and their interactions.

Perhaps the most interesting findings in this study are that the passive did not differ significantly in any area from active identity seekers. On the surface, this appears inconsistent with Côté's strong support for developmental rather than default individualization. One potential explanation that would not negate the importance of adopting a developmental approach is that there may be no difference in identity development between those adopting a developmental or default approach to individualization *prior* to emerging adulthood, however, there may be effects if studied longitudinally. One of the bases for Arnett's theory of emerging adulthood is that development that used to be accorded to adolescence is now being done in the mid-twenties. The participants in this study were all first-year students, thus only at the start of this process. According to Côté, it is developmental individualization that allows one to build identity capital resources that "potentially reap *future* [italics added] dividends in the "identity markets" of late-modern communities" (2000, p. 209). In a longitudinal study, he found evidence that greater levels of agency at the age of 19 was related to higher job satisfaction, identity and personal development, and life satisfaction a decade later (Côté, 2002). Thus it is possible that these two clusters may enter emerging adulthood with the same psychosocial resources, but their perception of and approach to the period will have the greatest impact on their future trajectories.

Conclusions from these findings present a complex picture that requires future research to fully disentangle. Three clusters of individuals could be identified in the present study of individuals entering the period of emerging adulthood. Two have already amassed a certain amount of identity capital in terms of psychosocial maturity, self-esteem, and coping skills, and appear well adjusted, with low levels of depression. However, these groups are distinguished by their subjective perceptions of the period of life they are in. The first, termed active identity seekers, appears to be taking an agentic approach, seeking identity exploration, new things, and experimentation. This group seems to be well-positioned to take full advantage of the moratorium presented in emerging adulthood. The other group, the passive, is less enthused about self-discovery and open possibilities despite their maturity level and present adjustment. Their apathy may have long-range implications for their development as they attempt the transition to adulthood. The remaining individuals are labeled discouraged, and enter emerging adulthood without the resources of the other two groups. However, their subjective approach to the period is potentially less dire. While they appear to be facing obstacles at the moment, resulting in high levels of negativity, they do seem more agentic at heart than the passive, which may enable them to develop further in the future.

*Strengths and Limitations of the Current Study*

One of the greatest strengths of this study is its examination of the subjective views of emerging adults. At the core of Arnett's theory is the idea that "the more individualistic a culture becomes, the more the transition to adulthood is individually rather than socially defined. It takes place subjectively, internally, in an individual's

*sense* of having reached a state of cognitive self-sufficiency, emotional self-reliance, and behavioral self-control" (Arnett & Taber, 1994, p. 533). Furthermore, Côté suggests that the approach an individual takes to individualization is important, which suggests that their subjective attitudes about identity exploration, future possibilities, and status as an autonomous adult in society are critical to understanding and predicting developmental trajectories. In speaking about the trend toward greater individualization in the modern world, Furlong and Cartmel (1997) state "subjective feelings of risk have become a much more significant feature of young people's lives and this has implications for their experiences and lifestyles" (p. 7). Thus studying the views and interpretations of emerging adults can add an important component to our understanding of the period beyond description and analysis of more objective, demographic features.

A significant limitation to this research is that it did not include longitudinal data. First, this produces findings that are correlational. In particular, this impacts our understanding of the direction of the relationship between cluster membership and external variables. Arnett's (2000b) view of emerging adulthood is one in which "it is possible for people with difficult pasts to begin to take hold of their lives and make choices that will gradually enable them to build the kind of life they want" (p. 206). Côté's (2000) theory of identity capital also incorporates the idea that psychosocial resources can be built upon if an agentic approach to opportunities is adopted. Without longitudinal data, it is impossible to determine how factors like psychosocial maturity and self-esteem impact the subjective views of individuals once they enter emerging

adulthood, and how such variables might be outcomes of having taken a particular approach and thus actively or passively pursuing options for personal development.

Second, non-longitudinal data prevents conclusions from being drawn about the long term outcomes of the subjective views of, or approach to, the transition to adulthood. Côté (2000) explicitly suggests negative outcomes of taking a default approach to individualization, both for individuals and for society as a whole. He links default individualization with negative personal outcomes stating, "many people wallow in forms of immaturity characterized by partially formed ideals, identities, and skills" (p. 31). He also suggests that the prevalence of this approach has led to the emergence of a state he calls "youthhood," a permanent form of adolescence that replaces adulthood. On the other hand, he believes that developmental individualization can reverse this trend, stating "if the bulk of the adult-aged population were capable of a universalizing consciousness with a caring particularism and had the active, agentic personality structure to actualize its ethical outlook, I believe that many of the problems created by later modern society could be rectified by the collective political will that would emerge" (p. 215). Arnett also believes in potential of the moratorium represented by emerging adulthood. He suggests that "emerging adulthood is a time of life when many different directions remain possible, when little about the future has been decided for certain, when the scope of independent exploration of life's possibilities is greater for most people than it will be at any other period of the life course" (2000a, p. 469). Furthermore, because the findings in this study support a relationship between subjective views of emerging adulthood and other variables that *have* been studied longitudinally, it would be

important to understand to what extent these views help to predict future trajectories beyond what is already known.

Finally, an issue that could be considered both a limitation and a strength is that our participants were all first-year university students. This is a drawback because it perpetuates the existence of a "forgotten half" (see Arnett, 2000a), the individuals who do not attend college following high school and are thus less easily available for academic research. Focusing only on a subset of the population considered to be emerging adults (i.e., all youth aged 18-25) also limits the potential to understand the group as a single entity or developmental group. For this reason, caution should be exercised when generalizing from results. However, one of the tenants of the theory of emerging adulthood is that individuals, especially in this age range, are characterized precisely by their heterogeneity (Arnett, 2000b). Thus it is possible that a study like this one, without the resources to assemble an extremely large number of participants, would not have been able to distinguish the clusters apparent in this sample across a broader range of subjects. Especially using a statistical technique such as cluster analysis, the ratio of participants in each cell limits the potential for further analysis. In this study, three clusters of individuals were identified and compared on several other variables. It is possible, perhaps even likely, that more than three clusters could be identified in the entire population of emerging adults. With a sample of this size, a more diverse cross section might have resulted in findings that were undecipherable in a meaningful way.

Given the necessity of limiting the sample to a particular subset of emerging adults, college students are a particularly interesting group in which to study perceptions

of the transition to adulthood. As Lewis (2003) explains, "the diversity of experiences available in the college setting may provide a trigger for consideration of identity issues" (p.161). Similarly, Baker (2003) states that "the transition to university is a time when individuals are faced with many new interpersonal, social, and academic demands. There is extensive evidence that such a time is stressful for many individuals, and that adjustment during this period is linked to the way individuals cope with that stress which impacts on physical and psychological health (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1992; van Rooijen, 1986), and academic motivation and performance (Sharma, 1973; Zitzow, 1984)" (p. 571). Given that the importance of identity exploration and the ability to cope with external demands are features of both Arnett's and Côté's theories, studying the perceptions of individuals in situations when such issues are brought to the fore might lead to the identification of approaches to the period that would not be seen as clearly if individuals in different circumstances were included.

*Conclusions and Future Directions*

The current study contributes to the literature on emerging adulthood by addressing the subjective views of youth, by connecting an individual's approach to the period with psychosocial variables, and by adding to the work that has just begun to combine theories such as that of Arnett and Côté into a cohesive perspective on the transition to adulthood (Schwartz et al., 2005). Future research should include longitudinal designs that speak to the long-term outcomes of having a particular subjective view of emerging adulthood, as well as the importance of having accumulated psychosocial resources prior to age 18. The three clusters found in this research should

also be replicated in other samples, and it should be explored whether they appear in different contexts and at different ages. To what extent is cluster membership reflective of personality dispositions or traits, versus a temporary response to the transition to university? At the intraindividual level, is cluster membership stable across time and situation? These are all questions that should be addressed if we are to truly understand the importance of emerging adulthood and the significance of adopting a particular approach to it.

In conclusion, research on the transition to adulthood as a developmental period is in its infancy, and while it is a rapidly growing area of interest, there is not a large body of literature on the subject at this point (Schwartz et al., 2005; Shanahan et al., 2005). While demographic shifts have been highlighted, and the concept of an institutionalized Eriksonian moratorium has been revitalized in new theories, the ramifications of this period both to individuals and society have yet to be fully understood. Two theorists with strong opinions on the matter are Dr. Jeffrey Arnett and Dr. James Côté, and this study has sought connections between their perspectives in order to further the discourse on this section of the lifespan. Despite some differences in viewpoint, both authors would agree with Hill and Yeung's (1999) suggestion that:

> In many respects, young adulthood is one of the most complex of the chronological life stages, and it may be one of the most crucial as well for determining the life paths that follow. During young adulthood most individuals, be it intentionally or accidentally, determine answers, and these answers shape

their family life and occupational career, both immediately and far into the future. (p. 5)

For this reason, research in this area is important if we are to understand human development across the life-span, and if we are to have the basis on which to intervene if necessary, both individually and collectively, to start young people on their best trajectories for growth.

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# APPENDIX A

## Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood (IDEA)

### Views of Life

**First, please think about this time in your life. By "time in your life," we are referring to the present time, plus the last few years that have gone by, and the next few years to come, as you see them. In short, you should think about a roughly five-year period, with the present time right in the middle.**

**For each phrase shown below, please select the button in one of the columns to indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree that the phrase describes this time in your life. For example, if you "Somewhat Agree" that this is a "time of exploration," then on the same line as the phrase, you would put a check mark in the column headed by "Somewhat Agree" (3).**

| **Is this period of your life a time of...** | Strongly Disagree 1 | Somewhat Disagree 2 | Somewhat Agree 3 | Strongly Agree 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. many possibilities? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. exploration? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. confusion? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. experimentation? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. personal freedom? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6. feeling restricted? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 7. responsibility for yourself? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 8. feeling stressed out? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 9. instability? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 10. optimism? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 11. high pressure? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 12. finding out who you are? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 13. settling down? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 14. responsibility for others? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 15. independence? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Next

**Views of Life Survey**

| Is this period of your life a time of... | Strongly Disagree 1 | Somewhat Disagree 2 | Somewhat Agree 3 | Strongly Agree 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16. open choices? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 17. unpredictability? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 18. commitments to others? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 19. self-sufficiency? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 20. many worries? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 21. trying out new things? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 22. focusing on yourself? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 23. separating from parents? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 24. defining yourself? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 25. planning for the future? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 26. seeking a sense of meaning? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 27. deciding on your own beliefs and values? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 28. learning to think for yourself? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 29. feeling adult in some ways but not others? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 30. gradually becoming an adult? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 31. being not sure whether you have reached full adulthood? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Next

**Identity Exploration: 12, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28**
**Experimentation/Possibilities: 1, 2, 4, 16, 21**
**Negativity/Instability: 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 17, 20**
**Other-Focus: 13, 14, 18**
**Self-Focus: 5, 7, 10, 15, 19, 22**
**Feeling "In-Between": 29, 30, 31**

Reifman, A., Arnett, J.J., & Colwell, M.J. (2003, August). *The IDEA: Inventory of the Dimensions of Emerging Adulthood.* Presentation at the 111th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, Canada.

# APPENDIX B

## Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory (EPSI)

**WHO I AM**

**Indicate how much you feel each statement below is true for you.**

| | | Hardly Ever True | | Sometimes True | | Almost Always True |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I am able to take things as they come | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | I can't make sense of my life | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | I get embarrassed when someone begins to tell me personal things | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | I can't make up my own mind about things | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | I change my opinion of myself a lot | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | I'm never going to get on in this world | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | I'm ready to get involved with a special person | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | I've got a clear idea of what I want to be | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. | I feel mixed up | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. | I know when to please myself and when to please others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. | The important things in life are clear to me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. | I don't seem to be able to achieve my ambitions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | I've got it together | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | **Hardly Ever True** | | **Sometimes True** | | **Almost Always True** |
| 14. | I know what kind of person I am | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. | I don't enjoy working | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. | I'm a hard worker | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17. | I'm warm and friendly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. | I really believe in myself | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. | I can't decide what I want to do with my life | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. | It's important to me to be completely open with my friends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. | I feel I am a useful person to have around | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. | I keep what I really think and feel to myself | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. | I'm trying hard to achieve my goals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. | I have a strong sense of what it means to be female/male | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. | I am ashamed of myself | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | **Hardly Ever True** | | **Sometimes True** | | **Almost Always True** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26. | I'm good at my work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. | I think it's crazy to get too involved with people | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. | I like myself and am proud of what I stand for | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. | I don't really know what I'm all about | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. | I can't stand lazy people | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. | I care deeply for others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. | I find I have to keep up a front when I'm with people | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33. | I don't really feel involved | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34. | I waste a lot of my time messing around | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 35. | I like to make my own choices | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36. | I don't feel confident of my judgment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | **Hardly Ever True** | | **Sometimes True** | | **Almost Always True** |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 37. | I'm basically a loner | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38. | I'm not much good at things that need brains or skill | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 39. | I have a close physical and emotional relationship with another person | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 40. | I stick with things until they're finished | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41. | I can stand on my own two feet | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 42. | I find it hard to make up my mind | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 43. | I like my freedom and don't want to be tied down | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 44. | I prefer not to show too much of myself to others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 45. | I don't get things finished | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 46. | I don't get much done | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 47. | Being alone with other people makes me feel uncomfortable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 48. | I find it easy to make close friends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Autonomy: 1, 2, 4, 6, 10, 18, 25, 35, 36, 41, 42, 43**
**Industry: 12, 15, 16, 21, 23, 26, 30, 34, 38, 40, 45, 46**
**Identity: 5, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 19, 24, 28, 29, 32, 33**
**Intimacy: 3, 7, 17, 20, 22, 27, 31, 37, 39, 44, 47, 48**
**Reverse coded items: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 12, 15, 19, 22, 25, 27, 29, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 42, 44, 45, 46, 47**

Rosenthal, D.A., Gurney, R.M., & Moore, S.M. (1981). From trust to intimacy: A new inventory for examining Erikson's stages of psychosocial development. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 10,* 525-537.

## APPENDIX C

### Extrinsic Contingency Focus Scale (ECFS)

**Personal Attitudes**

**Read each statement and then select the circle that best describes how you feel.**

| | Strongly Disagree | | | | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. I rarely think about how people are evaluating me. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 2. I would not bother trying to learn a musical instrument if I knew that I would never be able to play well enough to impress people. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 3. In social gatherings I hardly ever think about how other people are judging me. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 4. I work hard at things because of the social approval it provides me with. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 5. I immediately think of what others will think when I accomplish something great. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 6. I would go to my high school reunion to show everyone how well I have done since then. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 7. It is not important that I get recognition for the tasks I undertake. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 8. Being recognized as a hero would be a very rewarding part of saving someone's life. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 9. I exercise because it makes me more attractive to others. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 10. When I have done a good job, it is important that my supervisor acknowledges it. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 11. Whenever I voice my opinion, I feel uneasy unless someone voices agreement. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Next

**Personal Attitudes**

| | Strongly Disagree | | | | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I find I have little interest in a task unless there is the possibility that I will get recognition for doing it. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 13. I often get concerned with how others are evaluating me. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 14. When I know I'm being evaluated, I feel uneasy until I receive feedback. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 15. If I could just improve my performance in life, people would respect me more. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 16. I have an image to maintain. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 17. I feel as though people like me less when I make mistakes. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 18. Before acting I rarely think about how others will evaluate me. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 19. I find it quite easy to discuss sensitive issues in front of others. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 20. I feel as though people will respect me whether I am a success or failure. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 21. The clothes I wear say nothing about who I really am. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 22. I would compete in a public event, even if I knew I couldn't win. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| 23. I interact with people at social gatherings without thinking about how they might affect my reputation. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Next

**Reverse coded items: 1, 3, 7, 18-21**

Williams, T. J. & Schimel, J. (2006). *The moderating role of extrinsic contingency focus on reactions to threat.* Unpublished manuscript.

APPENDIX D

Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D short)

**HOW I FEEL**

**Below is a list of some of the ways you might have felt or behaved. Please indicate how often you have felt this way *during the past week*.** (circle **one** number on each line)

| **During the past week...** | **Rarely or none of the time** (less than 1 day) | **Some or a little of the time** (1-2 days) | **Occasionally or a moderate amount of time** (3-4 days) | **Most or all of the time** (5-7 days) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2. I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3. I felt depressed..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. I felt that everything I did was an effort... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5. I felt hopeful about the future..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6. I felt fearful... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7. My sleep was restless... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8. I was happy..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 9. I felt lonely... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 10. I could not "get going"... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

**Reverse coded items: 5 & 8**

Andresen, E.M., Malmgren, J.A., Carter, W.B., & Patrick, D.L. (1994). Screening for depression in well older adults: Evaluation of a short form of the CES-D. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 10,* 77-84.

Radloff, L.S. (1977). The CES-D scale: A self-report depression scale for research in the general population. *Applied Psychological Measurement, 1,* 385-401.